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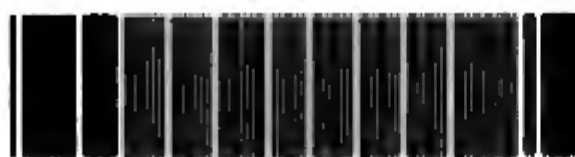
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A

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

IN WHICH IT IS INTENDED TO

CONSIDER MEN AND EVENTS

ON

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES.

VOL. II.

EXTENDING

FROM THE SIGNATURE OF MAGNA CHARTA

TO THE

DEATH OF EDWARD IV.

BY A

CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

“ Scripture gives us an account of the world, in this one single view, as God’s world.”—BISHOP BUTLER.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR C. J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,
ST. PAUL’S CHURCH-YARD,
AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.
1830.

226. C. 140.

LONDON :
GILBERT & RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BOOK IV.

ENGLAND UNDER THE PLANTAGENETS; FROM THE
SIGNATURE OF MAGNA CHARTA TO THE DOWNFALL
OF THE FIRST BRANCH OF THAT RACE.

CHAPTER I.

Henry III. surnamed, of Winchester.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>Popes.</i>	
	A.D.		A.D.
Otho IV.		Honorius III.	
Frederic II.....	1212	Gregory IX.	1227
William	1250	Celestine IV.....	1241
		Innocent IV.....	1243
		Alexander IV.	1254
<i>Kings of France.</i>		Urban IV.	1261
Philip Augustus.		Clement IV.	1265
Louis VIII.	1223	Gregory X.	1271
St. Louis IX.....	1226		
Philip III.	1270	<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
		Theodore.	
<i>Kings of Scotland.</i>		John Ducas	1222
Alexander II.		Theodore II.	1255
Alexander III.	1249	Michael Palæologus	1260

HAD king John left no heirs, the English nobility
would have had nothing to unite them in preferring
any one individual as king, to the French prince,

whom they had invited over; and thus England would have become altogether subject to France. Had he, on the other hand, left a politic and warlike son, capable of rallying his party, and driving Louis out of the country, such a monarch might also have succeeded in shaking off the restraints which Magna Charta had so lately imposed on the royal authority; the nation not being yet habituated to regard the terms of the charter as their inalienable birth-right. But it had pleased the Great Disposer of events, that John should die before the whole of England had received, or submitted to Louis; leaving a son whose tender years exempted him from the charge of having had any share in his father's misconduct; and whose weakness of character, when he attained to manhood, made him incapable of checking the growing spirit of independence amongst his subjects.

Henry III. was but in his tenth year when the bishops, and such of the nobility as had adhered to his father, did him homage at Gloucester;

Oct. 28,
1216.

and made him swear to do justice, to abrogate evil customs and laws, and to observe, and cause others to observe, such as were good. The crown of England had been lost with other jewels in the Wash; but, in lieu of it, a circlet of gold was placed upon his head by Gualo the legate; who continued weakly to pour out curses against Louis, for his invasion of the pope's property, and attack upon his vassal. So the papal court had affected to speak of England and its king, ever since the surrender made to Pandulf by John. The legate, and William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, acting as the young king's guardian, also put their seals to a renewal of Magna Charta; issued in the name of the young king.

Superstition, loyalty to the family which had so long reigned over them, compassionate reluctance to stripping a child of his inheritance for faults not *his own*, jealousy of Louis's natural preference for

his countrymen, all now combined to induce the English nobles to desert the French prince, whose protection they no longer needed, and to join the standard of the Earl of Pembroke.

Happily two battles proved sufficiently decisive to save England from the miseries of a protracted civil war. The main body of Louis's troops and adherents, reckoned at 600 knights and 20,000 men, had moved northward, under the command of the Count de Perche, and were engaged in besieging Lincoln Castle; when the Earl of Pembroke summoned the king's friends to meet him, in arms, at Newark. The French laughed at the first reports of the Earl's proceedings, but pressed the siege the more vigorously; working incessantly at engines, by which vast stones were thrown into the castle, to crush the defenders, or drive them from the walls. At length the Earl, having been joined by 400 knights and their followers, marched from Newark to Stow; whence he turned back upon Lincoln by an old Roman road. The Earl of Winchester, who still supported Louis, had gone out to reconnoitre the English forces; and, telling the Count de Perche that their numbers were very inferior to his, advised him to attack them as they should be coming up the hill; 'And there,' said he, 'we shall catch them like so many larks.' But the Count replied, 'You Englishmen are but inexperienced soldiers, I will look to their numbers myself.' Now it so happened that the gentlemen of England were then accustomed to have two flags, painted with their armorial bearings; one to be borne near their persons, the other to distinguish their servants and baggage. The Count, therefore, looking from the high ground, and seeing the bright colours of a second line of flags, as the train of waggons and servants followed at some interval, in the rear of their masters, took them for the standards of a second army. *He consequently disregarded the Earl of*

Winchester's opinion, and drew all his forces within the gates of the city. The effect of this was, that a number of English bowmen and slingers entered into the castle by a postern door; and, shooting the horses of the French knights, as they drew up towards the north gate, so embarrassed them, that the defence of the gate was almost entirely neglected; and the Earl of Pembroke's men, bursting it open, found their enemies in confusion, and several knights entangled with their heavy armour under their fallen steeds. The resistance of the French was soon at an end; but when they endeavoured to escape out of the town, a heavy chain which hung athwart the southern gate, obliging each horseman to dismount and pull it open, to get out, and then, by its weight, closing the gate after him, kept the greater part of the French, and of their English adherents, shut up as in a trap; so that the royal army took 400 knights prisoners, besides three earls and eleven barons.

We read with astonishment in an historian who gives many very minute details, that the Count de Perche and two others were the only persons slain, in this engagement within the narrow and crowded streets of a city. The truth is, that the lower ranks were so little regarded as brethren, or even as fellow-creatures, in those days of knightly pride, that this historian made no account of the hundreds of common soldiers, whom another writer confesses to have been slaughtered without mercy. The nobles, on the other hand, were carefully spared, from the respect which the mob of combatants were obliged to pay to rank*; and for the sake of the profit which the gentlemen, to whom they surrendered, expected to make by selling them back their liberty. Indeed, what with prisoners and spoil; for which they robbed houses and churches alike, the con-

* See Vol. I. p. 426.

querors had gained so much and, as they thought, at so little trouble, that they gave to this engagement the name of Lincoln Fair.

His army having been thus entirely broken up, Louis had no hopes of bringing the contest to a successful end, unless he should receive very important assistance from France. But a fleet, of above eighty sail, coming over with fresh troops for him, was attacked in the straits of Dover by about half as many English vessels under the command of Hubert de Burgh, and only fifteen of the French ships escaped back to Calais. In this battle the English managed so as to come down the wind upon the French; and disabled them from defending their ships, by throwing quick lime into the air; which was blown into their eyes, and blinded them. The commander of the French fleet was a monk, named Eustace, who had made himself particularly obnoxious by his cruelty; and being found, concealed in the hold of one of his vessels, he was dragged forth to light, and his head struck off.

The consequence of this naval victory was a proposal from Prince Louis to quit England, and give up his claims to its crown; on condition, that the nobles, who had sided with him, ^{Sept. 11.} should not be molested, on that account, ^{1217.} after his departure. To this condition the Earl of Pembroke assented; and it was faithfully observed.

It is, indeed, very remarkable that the disputes and wars which were constantly occurring, in these ages, between the kings of England and their nobles, were never followed by executions on the scaffold. When the angry passions had been roused, and the mind filled with rage by that struggle of man with man for life, which then took place in every quarter of the field of battle, a king or general would sometimes issue orders of hideous ferocity *against foes who had submitted.* But, as soon

as the fever of wrath and violence was past, their preference of bravery before justice, made them regard a courageous enemy with a friendly eye, however ill they thought of his cause; and the custom of looking to the fines levied for breaches of the law as an important source of income, tempted the kings to extend that kind of punishment to almost every offence.

But whilst those who had fought against their young sovereign were frankly pardoned by his prudent minister, the legate refused to extend the like forgiveness to such of the clergy as had continued to perform the offices of religion in the presence of Henry's opponents, after the pope had excommunicated their party. These men were condemned by Gualo to the forfeiture of their benefices; that he might have them at his own disposal.

The Earl of Pembroke had now the satisfaction of seeing his faithful services eminently successful. The French had left England, and his young ward was its undisputed king. Llewellyn, Prince of North Wales, did homage to Henry; as did also the king of Mann and the Isles. And Alexander, king of Scotland, who had at first acknowledged Louis, now paid Henry the most respectful attention. To Ireland a charter was sent in the king's name, granting the same privileges to his subjects there, as the English had demanded. In France, Poitou and Gascony still remained as part of the inheritance of his forefathers. The king of Norway had sent, and requested that his subjects and the English might trade together on a fair and friendly footing.

On the other hand, Pope Honorius, like his predecessor, Innocent III., treated Henry as his vassal; and assumed the right of appointing the legate, Gualo, joint guardian with the Earl of Pembroke. To this the Earl seems to have made no opposition. The influence of the legate was most usefully, and *profitably*, employed in procuring a prohibition of

the trials by ordeal *; which had been allowed in many cases, up to this time, to determine the guilt or innocence of persons charged with felony. He and the Earl of Pembroke also united with the King's faithful Justiciary, Hubert de Burgh, in persuading the other nobles and the prelates to put their signatures to a document very creditable to all the persons concerned. For by it they agreed, that the great seal of England should not be A.D. 1218 affixed to any grant out of the king's estates, so long as Henry should remain a minor; thus shutting themselves out from any opportunity of taking an improper advantage of his inexperience to increase their own possessions. With the same attention to the rights of their young monarch, it was also agreed, that some important clauses in Magna Charta, which were thought by the courtiers to bear too hard upon the royal prerogative, should be suspended; till the whole could be carefully revised after his coming to man's estate.

Within a year after this the earl of Pembroke died, and Hubert de Burgh became the acting head of the government; though the care of the king's person was entrusted to Peter des Roches, an artful native of Poitou, whom John had made bishop of Winchester. And at the close of 1223, when the king was but in his seventeenth year, he announced to his subjects, that the pope had sent letters declaring it to be his will, that their young sovereign should have the unrestrained management of his affairs. Had Henry been prematurely sagacious, and this an age of peaceful and orderly habits, it would have been a dangerous experiment to trust an inexperienced boy with such power. But he was a weak youth; and though the leading persons in the state had, on the whole, fulfilled their duties, as such, in a praiseworthy manner, there were

* See Vol. I. pp. 246. 248.

still many who had been so long accustomed to neglect the control of their passions, that the most prudent government could not be expected to prevent their occasionally disturbing the public peace. Among the unprincipled adventurers who served the late king was one Fawkes de Breaute, whom John had remunerated with ample possessions ; besides giving him in marriage the heiress of the Rivers family. This man was condemned at Dunstable assizes to pay a considerable penalty for various violations of justice, and for contempt of the royal authority. On June 5, 1224, hearing of this sentence, he sallied from Bedford castle with an armed force, to seize the judges. They fled ; but he overtook Henry de Braybrook, one of their number, and carrying him to Bedford, threw him into a dark dungeon. It so happened that a parliament was then assembled at Northampton ; and, Braybrook's wife appealing to the king, to rescue her husband, a force was instantly raised for the purpose. The prelates laid their curse upon Fawkes, and all who should abet him ; whilst the king and barons made their appearance under the walls of Bedford castle, and demanded the release of the judge. But Fawkes cared for neither the church, nor the king. Once, indeed, after pillaging St. Alban's, murdering a man at the church door, and extorting money from the abbot, he was terrified by a story Pandulf told him of his dreams, into humbly begging pardon of the monks. But he had since pulled down St. Paul's church, in Bedford, for materials wherewith to repair and strengthen the castle. And the abbess of Elstow, seeing him still prosperous after this sacrilege, had deprived an image of St. Paul, which stood in her chapel, of the sword attached to it ; meaning to intimate that the Apostle was, in her estimation, unworthy to wear one, since he made no use of it. She little thought that if the zeal of departed saints was to display itself in acts of vengeance, the reve-

rence of the Apostle for those commandments which he called *holy, and just, and good*, and wherein it is said, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image to bow down to it and worship it*, might have provoked him to punish her, for setting up such an image of himself; and that he was not at all likely to regard the destruction of a church bearing his name, as a personal affront. He had written words which she ought to have read; declaring, that where he had been the special planter of a Church, he yet wished the members of that Church, instead of saying, *I am of Paul*, to reflect that, *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase* *.

The simple abbess, however, replaced the sword, when Bedford castle fell into the king's hands; and, being levelled by his orders, the materials were given back to restore the church. Yet Fawkes de Breaute had got off safely into Cheshire; having left the defence of the castle to his brother William. This brother, indeed, and eighty others of the garrison, were hung as soon as the place was taken; in the king's rage at the expence and loss of lives, incurred during the nine weeks which the siege occupied. But when Fawkes afterwards came in to the king, and surrendered his castles and estates, which were scattered over the country from Derbyshire to Stoke-Gursey and Plympton in the West of England, he was only ordered to quit the king's dominions for life; impoverished, but not poorer than he entered England a few years before.

The royal revenues had by this time dwindled down below £120,000; being less than a third of what they were in the Conqueror's reign. This was partly owing to the continual grants made by each succeeding monarch to the courtiers and to monasteries; and partly to the restraints imposed, by the

* 1 Cor. iii. 4. 7.

Charter, on various oppressive methods of raising money for the crown. Hence it became absolutely necessary to supply the wants of the king in some other way; especially as neither Normandy nor Anjou any longer contributed to his income. The nobles and prelates, therefore, assembled in parliament, agreed to give, for the king's use, a fifteenth of the value of all moveables; only conditioning in return, that the king should solemnly confirm the charters granted by his father. To prevent the courtiers from wasting this money, it was also agreed that the sum thus raised should be placed in a chest; from whence nothing was to be taken out till the king became of age, unless by a special warrant from six bishops and as many earls, appointed to take this charge upon them.

This kind of property-tax was, henceforward, very frequently resorted to during the next four centuries; and the manner in which it was to be levied is very

A. D. 1225. carefully described in a commission issued to Robert Lee and others, bearing date Feb. 15,

directing them to superintend its collection throughout the counties of Derby and Nottingham. These commissioners are told, that the sheriffs had received orders to summon the knights of those counties before them; and that they were to cause four to be chosen for each hundred, who were to assess the fifteenth; not however in their own, but in an adjoining hundred. To get at the value of each man's property, these assessors were to put every proprietor, below the rank of a knight, to his oath; and he was to declare his belief of the value of the moveables possessed by two of his neighbours, as well as that of his own. And if, when those neighbours came to be sworn, their valuation differed materially from his, a jury was to be called on the spot, and decide between the two estimates. The assessors and jurors, however, in their estimation of the value of any man's moveable property,

were to leave out the books of the gentry and clergy; the furniture of their chapels, or churches; their riding, and baggage horses; their arms; jewels; plate; utensils; stores of meat, wine, and beer; hay; and corn, if intended for garrison use. In like manner, the estimate of a tradesman's moveables was not to comprehend his utensils, riding-horses; stores of food for his family; nor such arms, as he was sworn to provide. From the villain*, or farmer's moveable property, they were to leave out his utensils; and all such provision, for men and cattle, as was intended for consumption and not for sale; as also the arms he was sworn to provide. It is, on the other hand, expressly laid down that the merchandise of the tradesman, and the farming produce intended for sale, must be valued at what they would fetch; and that the fifteenth of that value was to be levied by the collectors. This tax, therefore, pressed very much heavier upon these classes than upon the gentry and nobility; though the latter, being accustomed to receive their rents in kind, would have large stores of corn at that season, liable to be valued and rated. Still it was little more than an income-tax of six and a half per cent. upon the gentry, after the exemptions specified; whereas it was a property-tax to the enormous amount of nearly a fifteenth of all they were worth, on the tradesman and farmer.

It must be recollected, however, that this was not an annual tax. The value of his fifteenth was to be paid by every man, half before the following Trinity Sunday, and the other half before the following Michaelmas; but then this sum was expected to supply all the wants of government, beyond what was met by its ordinary income, for several years. The amount proved to be about £178,000. It was, nevertheless, very improvident to take a larger sum

* See p. 383. Vol. I.

from the tradesman, or farmer, than was wanted for the year ; and lay it up, useless, in a chest. For, if the capital had been left in its owner's hands, he might have made sufficient profit upon it to pay the same sum to government, as it was needed, without the loss, to himself, of half so much capital as was thus taken from him.

Soon after the levying of this tax, pope Honorius sent an agent, named Otho, to make a request from the English clergy ; of the same kind as
 A.D. 1226. he was then intent upon urging throughout

Europe. In the letter, of which Otho was the bearer, the pope declared that the Roman church had, for a long time, given great scandal, and been exceedingly reproached for covetousness ; and particularly on this ground, that no person could get through with any business in the papal court without a great expenditure of money, and making many presents. After this remarkable confession, it would have been seemly to have added, that he would do his utmost to prevent the Roman see from appearing any more, henceforward, to covet the wealth of others. But the letter went on to say, that he therefore desired to have two prebends set apart in every cathedral, and the maintenance of two monks in every monastery, to be paid henceforward to the pope's agents ; that so the Roman court, being sufficiently supplied, might be under no temptation in future to demand excessive fees, for distributing justice to those who had causes to plead there. This request was refused. Yet pope Gregory IX., who, very shortly after, succeeded

Honorius, was not deterred thereby from sending over another messenger, or *Nuncio* *, to
 A.D. 1229. require the tenth of all moveables ; avowedly ;

* The name of Nuncio was given to such agents, or ambassadors, from the pope, as came to transact business for him, with the sovereign or clergy of any country, without being commissioned, as the legates had for some time been, to act as governors of the church.

for the purpose of carrying on war against the Roman Emperor. So the popes styled the Emperor of Germany. Now by giving him this title, the pope did, in reality, profess to consider him as continuing in possession of the rights which once belonged to the Roman Emperors; amongst which was, of course, comprehended a paramount authority over the city of Rome, and, in temporal matters at least, over the pope as its bishop. So that for the pope to make war upon the emperor, was, by his own shewing, nothing less than rebellion; and it was, confessedly, to enable him to maintain this rebellion, that the pope asked from the people of England a larger share of each man's property, than the necessities of their own government had ever induced them to concede to it.

The nuncio asserted, that the bishops of Chester and Rochester had promised the pope this tenth; when they lately induced him to refuse consecrating the person whom the monks of Canterbury had chosen for archbishop. If it was so, there could not be a stronger proof that those bishops believed it to be impossible, as Honorius said, to make reason heard in the pope's court, without paying for it by the most extravagant gifts. For the body of English bishops had charged the archbishop elect, with being a man of grossly vicious habits; and the pope himself had officially declared, that having examined the man, he found him utterly unfit for so high an office, from his excessive ignorance. But, whatever the bishops might have promised, the nobles, assembled in parliament at Westminster, declared that they would not burden their estates with any taxes for the service of the pope. The clergy after four days discussion were driven, by the fear of excommunication, to assent to the demand. But when they had assented, they found that the nuncio would not allow any such deductions *in estimating their moveables*, as the collectors

for the king had been directed to grant. And as for those clergymen who could not raise a sufficient sum to pay the tenth, at a short date, they were compelled by the nuncio to make up the deficiency with money borrowed, at extravagant interest, from some Italian usurers; who had come over with him, to share the spoils of the English.

In the meanwhile England was more exempt from the waste and destruction of war, than it had been for a long time previously. A crusade, to which the English had been invited, with tales of many lying wonders, had carried out of the country sixty thousand restless characters, and Peter des Roches among the rest. In his absence the king more willingly attended to the counsels of Hubert de Burgh, though very angry at being thwarted by him in a foolish project for reconquering Normandy; which the king, nevertheless, would not resign; but sailed to France, with a large force, in April, 1230. From this expedition he returned in October; having wasted much treasure to no purpose; and taught his subjects to think him incapable of conducting a war with either activity or prudence. The temptations to which power exposes a statesman were too much for the prudence of De Burgh. He got the king to make him earl of Kent, and gave his enemies but too reasonable grounds for charging him with accepting so many grants as impoverished his thoughtless sovereign. The nobles had been irritated by his advising Henry to make several of them resign the government of different castles belonging to the crown. The pope too had sent over a strong remonstrance against the outrages lately committed on the property of the church; which De Burgh was strongly suspected of encouraging. The leader in these outrages was Robert Thwenge, a Yorkshire knight, who, assisted by several bold companions, had undertaken to punish the Italian *clergy throughout England*, for the pope's injustice

in thrusting one of them into a living, of which Thwenge was the lawful patron. The truth is, that among the daily encroachments of the popes, none angered the nation more than their taking upon them to bestow a great many English benefices on Italian priests. Hence none of the sheriffs, or other ministers of the crown had chosen to stop Thwenge's proceedings; whilst he and his comrades traversed the country in open day, and emptying the tythe barns of one Italian incumbent after another, distributed their contents among the poor. The justiciary, certainly, ought not to have permitted any private persons to attempt correcting the wrong of others by their own violence; and the pillaging of some barns belonging to a member of the chapter of Winchester, at a time when the king happened to be feasting with Peter des Roches, its bishop, on his return, was naturally regarded by Henry as a personal affront to himself. Of this Des Roches took advantage, and persuaded the king to deprive De Burgh of the office of Justiciary*, ^{July,} 1232. and to bestow it on Stephen Segrave, a creature of his own. No sooner had De Burgh been dismissed than his enemies brought forward against him a long list of accusations.

One of the charges against his late minister, to which Henry had the weakness to lend an ear, was,

* On the 16th of June, previous to De Burgh's dismissal, the king appears to have signed a document, granting to all the inhabitants of Colteshall in Norfolk, that they, their wives and children after them for ever, should be free men and women; and be held as such wherever else in England they might be found dwelling. As this released them from liability to several demands, it was stipulated, that six shillings a year should be levied on the village, and paid to the king at Michaelmas in every year; also twenty shillings as scutage for the land now made freehold, whenever scutage should be demanded; and twenty shillings as aid, when the king's eldest son should be knighted. No particular reason is assigned for granting this privilege; so that it may perhaps have been viewed merely as a bargain by which the villagers purchased their freedom.

that he had stolen from the royal treasury a stone which made the possessor invincible ; and had sent it to Llewellyn, Prince of North Wales.

De Burgh, thus attacked, requested time to prepare his answers : but took refuge, in the meanwhile, in Merton Priory. Thither the Mayor of London was ordered, at Des Roches suggestion, to lead the citizens, and drag Hubert forth. But the earl of Chester asked the king, what would be said of him abroad if he behaved with cruelty to a man who had protected his infancy from harm, when his inheritance was in such imminent danger. This rebuke made Henry blush ; and he sent two messengers to recall the mayor. The zeal of one of these men made him put spurs to his horse, and he reached the mayor almost breathless ; just in time to save Hubert's life from the violence of a mob, who hated, because they had long feared him.

After this the archbishop of Dublin interceded ; and prevailed with the king to let De Burgh retire to his family estates in Suffolk, till his guilt or innocence could be fairly determined. But before De Burgh had finished his journey, Henry, in alarm lest he should use his influence to raise a rebellion, dispatched a knight, named Godfrey Craucombe, with 300 men, in pursuit of him ; giving them positive orders to bring him back bound, a prisoner, to the Tower. De Burgh was reposing at Terling in Essex, a house belonging to the bishop of Norwich, when he heard that pursuers were at hand ; and straightway fled from his bed to the chapel. There they found him holding in one hand a cross, and in the other the consecrated wafer ; which they believed to be the very flesh and blood of our Lord ; and therefore ought to have honoured as such. But the men feared the wrath of the king more than that of God, so they snatched from him, with violent hands, these objects of superstitious worship ; *and, binding him with cords, sent for the village*

blacksmith to prepare fetters directly. "And for whose legs," said the man, "are these fetters intended?" "Hubert de Burgh; a traitor and a fugitive," was the answer. "Then," said the blacksmith, "you must do with me as you please; and may God be merciful to my soul. But as the Lord liveth, I will never make any chains of iron to be fitted on him. I would rather lose my life. Is not this that same faithful and brave Hubert, who has often saved the country from being the spoil of its enemies; and made England itself again? Did not he serve the king's father abroad so manfully, that our enemies thought much of him? Did not he keep Louis out of Dover Castle, and destroy the French fleet? May God judge between you and him; for you are returning him good for evil".

This honest man's praise was cheering to Hubert, in the hour of affliction; but Godfrey Craucombe and his companions were ready to do fouler work to please a king than the poor blacksmith of Terling chose to soil his hands withal; though they despised the remonstrance of an unwashed artificer. Men whose nicety would *make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter*, forget that there is One who seeth it to be, *within, full of extortion and excess*.

When, however, Hubert de Burgh had been carried to the Tower, the Bishop of London rebuked the king for having sanctioned such an invasion of the privileges of the church; and declared that he would instantly excommunicate every person concerned, if De Burgh was not carried safely back to the chapel from whence he had been torn away. His demand was complied with to the letter. Hubert was carried back; but a deep trench was drawn, at the same time, round the bishop of Norwich's house and chapel; and the sheriff was made answerable for his not escaping. Presently an order of greater severity was sent down; and, no provisions being

any longer suffered to enter the chapel door, Hubert was obliged to come out and surrender himself. And now some recommended to the king to put him to death; but Henry, though weak, was not of a bloody disposition. He replied to these tempters, "I had rather be thought foolish and too easy than a cruel tyrant; thirsting after the blood of a man, who has often put his life in danger to save me and my predecessors." De Burgh was brought to

his trial before a commission of nobles, who
 Nov. 10, held a court for this purpose on Cornhill.
 1232.

He declined, however, entering upon any defence; and surrendered all his property to the king. Every late grant from the crown was resumed; but Henry allowed him to keep whatever lands he had inherited or bought, yet commanded him to be kept in custody at Devizes Castle. Two years after, Hubert was again reconciled to the king, through the mediation of Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury. This archbishop seems to have been happily distinguished as a peace-maker, whenever he interfered in affairs of state.

He also made some efforts to reform his diocese; particularly the intriguing monks of Canterbury. But they got the legate to interfere; who so thwarted all his measures that Edmund left England, to try the effects of a personal conference with the pope. Failing in his object, and grieved at the wickedness which he found himself unable to put down, the good man sickened; and his body being weakened with fastings, and from self-imposed hardships which broke his sleep, he was rapidly brought down

A.D. to his grave. His death took place in France,
 1240. near to Pontigny, and there he was buried.

Being sincerely respected in England, his countrymen gave full credit to the stories which the monks of Pontigny spread abroad, to draw pilgrims to their monastery. In an official application to the pope, *requesting him to put Edmund on the church's list*

of saints, these monks solemnly affirmed their personal knowledge of such miracles, wrought for those who called upon Edmund's name, as more than equal all that the Scriptures have related of the works done in the name of Christ himself. The absurdity of this collection of miracles attributed to Edmund's power, or intercession, is worth notice; for had the writers of the New Testament been compiling a string of falsehoods, instead of relating miracles which really took place, there is no sufficient ground for supposing that they would not have invented as foolish miracles, wrought for as childish ends, as the monks of Pontigny; who told the Pope, that by calling on the name of Edmund, some had got rid of the tooth-ache; others of pimples and blots, which had previously spoiled the beauty of the suppliant's countenance; others, again, of humps on their backs; and that even cattle had shared the benefits showered upon his votaries.

Yet the monks were not guilty of intentional fraud in all the cases they alleged. For the *strong delusion* to which those persons were given up, who *received not the love of the truth* as contained in that word which *is truth* *, made them so credulous, that they were eager to proclaim the miraculous power of the saint in whom they trusted; whenever events turned out more favourably than they had expected. Thus before Archbishop Edmund had been dead full four years, Nicholas Bishop of Durham, finding his ignorant physicians unable to cure his disorders, made a vow to visit Edmund's tomb, at Pontigny. But, when his servants perceived that the fatigue of the journey did but make him get alarmingly worse, one of them told the Bishop how he had formerly been barber to Edmund; and, foreseeing that his master would be deemed a saint, had preserved the clippings of his beard. Upon this Bishop Nicholas

* 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. and John xvii. 17.

besought his servant to let him have some of those clippings to drink, in a cup of holy water. The barber accordingly put some stumps of a beard into the cup; which made the bishop exceedingly sick. This relieving his complaint, he began forthwith to recover; and declared St. Edmund had wrought an evident miracle, in his cure. To make the wonder greater, it was soon reported that the disorder, of which he had been healed, was a combination of cough, asthma, jaundice, and dropsy.

But when the monks had drawn crowds to Pontigny, by the circulation of such stories as these, their avarice tempted them to sell one of St.

A.D. 1250. Edmund's arms; which they, therefore, cut off from the body they had so much affected

to revere. This, becoming known, ruined their trade. For the poor blind worshippers of the saint, who had been instructed to think that he would confer blessings on those who honoured his remains, naturally concluded, that he would no longer exert himself to do aught for the contributors to a monastery in which his corpse had been mutilated for base lucre. Hence the number of pilgrims to Pontigny rapidly fell away.

As long as the Earl of Pembroke, or De Burgh, was the chief minister of the crown, affairs were conducted with nearly the same firmness and prudence as if those statesmen had been the sovereigns of the country. For as they did not owe their authority to the king's favour, but to the influence which their reputations and ample property gave them; so neither did they feel it necessary to purchase the king's good will by any improper deference to his weak judgment, when they saw it would be mischievous. But from the time of De Burgh's dismissal Henry placed the great offices of the state in the hands of different personal favourites: men who could have no authority, except so far as they were supported by himself, or by the

pope; and who regulated their conduct accordingly. They saw that the king was incapable of valuing his ministers for the soundness of their political measures; so they made it their only object to retain his ill-judged partiality, by flatteries and by attention to his caprices; or to gain the support of the pope, by subserviency to the designs of the papal court.

Being avowedly regarded in this reign as lords paramount, the popes might have employed their influence over Henry to the advantage both of himself and of the kingdom. But the desire of the prelates to draw this connection still closer, before they had found it so oppressive as it soon became, was near being ruinous to the infant constitution of their country; for it led them to propose to the barons the adoption of the Roman laws. One portion of these, called the *civil* law, is very sagaciously devised for the fair arrangement of disputes regarding property; the most numerous, and, in the estimation of too many, the most important questions in which society is interested. But the Roman laws were drawn up for the subjects of an absolute government; and therefore give absolute authority to the sovereign's will. It is painful to read that, in a parliament held at Merton, the prelates tempted the nobles to admit these laws, by observing to them, that the change would put it in A.D.
1235. their power to make their base-born children heirs, if they chose to marry the mother. The barons knew no more of the civil law than the bishops chose to tell them, but they had already learned to fear the snares of Rome; so they exclaimed with one voice, "We will not consent to change the laws of England."

Failing thus to bring the usages of this country into one system with those of their own provinces, the popes directed their power and their personal abilities *almost entirely* to the mean aim of turning

their connection with England to as much profit as possible ; demanding tribute from the king and clergy on a variety of pretexts, and managing to pay their own officers and enrich their dependants by grants of English benefices, instead of salaries from the papal treasury. After their evil example, Henry, instead of regarding his kingdom as a trust, for his faithful care of which he must one day answer before the King of kings, seemed to consider it only as a mine from which he might raise money for his own gratification, and that of his favourites. So that for the next six and twenty years of this long reign, the history of the government of the country is but an account of the excuses invented, by the pope or king, for continually *crying Give, give* ; and of the mischievous flatterers or idle companions, whom Henry enriched in their turn, at the expence of his people.

Bishop Peter des Roches, the first of these worthless favourites, filled the court with needy gentlemen from Poitou his native country ; and persuaded king Henry to put them into all the offices about his person, instead of the less obsequious English nobility. He and his party, however, were
 A.D. 1234. soon dismissed, in consequence of the threats of the barons, and the urgent expostulations of Archbishop Edmund ; and as Bishop des Roches had the ill reputation of being more given to fighting than to the study of the word of God, the pope invited him abroad to become the general of the papal troops. The king next betook himself to the like unreasonable partiality for the foreign relations of his Queen, Eleanor of Provence ; making one of her uncles Bishop of Winchester ; and another, Boniface of Savoy, a rough intemperate man, Archbishop of Canterbury. The children of Henry's mother Isabella, by her second marriage with the Count of la Marche *, came over next from France ;

* See Vol. I. p. 455.

and were in their turn, raised to wealth at the expence of the English nation. Still later in this king's reign very large sums were sent out of England to bribe the German princes to elect Richard earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, for their emperor ; and to purchase the kingdom of Sicily from the pope, for Henry's second son, Edmund. Earl Richard succeeded so far as to be chosen king of the Romans ; an unmeaning title, except that it was usually given to the person who was about to be made emperor. But he found that he had wasted his treasure for a name which brought him no revenue, and led to nothing further. And King Henry when he had sent his money to Rome, and bound himself to the Italian merchants for still more, was equally disappointed ; finding that the pope had not only no right to sell the kingdom of Sicily, but was quite unable to give Edmund possession of it, though he did his utmost to drive the Sicilians into rebellion against their sovereign.

Yet the profusion with which King Henry would have wasted the savings of his subjects was considerably checked by his being too weak to force the nation to submit to any general taxation, which had not the formal consent of the nobility and prelates assembled in parliament. This consent was sometimes positively refused ; which had the farther effect of discouraging his ministers from asking for such consent, when unprovided with a plausible excuse ; or it obliged them to offer such conditions as raised the power of parliament, at the expence of the authority of the crown. In one instance 1237. when a parliament had been summoned together to consult, as the barons supposed, on very different subjects, they were all called into the king's presence, and there addressed by a courtier ; who told them, that the king was determined to be ruled, henceforward, by the counsels of natives of this country, as *his most faithful advisers* ; but that the

officers of his exchequer had defrauded his treasury; and that he therefore requested their aid, and would leave the disposal of whatever sums they might grant in such hands as the barons should think proper. But this unexpected request was received with loud murmurs of disapprobation; and the king had the mortification of hearing it said, That it was both absurd and mischievous to allow a sovereign so easily led astray, to extort money from his subjects, on such foolish excuses, for the benefit of foreigners. To this the king replied with a solemn promise, That he would never give the nobility any just cause of complaint again; if they would but now grant him a thirtieth of their moveables, to make up for the heavy expence he had lately incurred, by marrying his sister Isabella to the Emperor Frederick. But the nobles again answered, that what had been done, had passed without their being consulted; and that therefore it was not fitting they should pay the penalty if any thing had been done indiscreetly. Nevertheless, they added, they would withdraw, and consider what might be advisable; if the case was, indeed, of real necessity. As they were retiring, another courtier, Gilbert Basset, said, "Would it not be better, my lord the king, that you should send one of your friends to be present at their conference." On hearing which, Richard Percy turned round with some indignation, and asked. "Are we then not reckoned amongst the friends of the king?"

The court, however, was kept for four days in suspense; till Henry, having ordered Langton's excommunication, against all violators of Magna Charta, to be proclaimed anew, so gratified the barons by this step, that they conceded the thirtieth for which he had asked. The prelates did the like, on behalf of the clergy. The Earl of Warrenne, Wm. de Ferrars, and John Fitz-Godfrey, were then sworn to give good counsel to the king;

and farther precautions were resolved upon, to prevent Henry from laying his hands on the money, if he should be disposed to break his word. Yet these precautions seem to have been eluded. For when Henry, about five years after, again asked his parliament for aid, to combat the king of France, the barons positively refused it; bidding him take care not to violate the existing truce between himself and Louis; and adding, that, as they had never been informed what became of the thirtieth, collected agreeably to their last grant, they could not but suppose that he had the whole of it by him, and therefore stood in no need of a farther supply.

On another occasion the barons would not consent to grant the king any money, but with A.D.
1248. such conditions that he preferred selling his plate and jewels. After the sale, he asked who had purchased his plate; and was answered, "The Londoners."—"I might have guessed it," said he. "London would buy up a Roman emperor's treasure. Those clownish people, the citizens, disgust me with their riches. That city is a well, that nothing can draw dry." The truth is, that Henry's unwarlike disposition had been favourable to commerce, allowing it to proceed with but few interruptions; and as the profits of trade will be high, when such periods of peace occur but rarely, and are of uncertain continuance, the merchants were doubtless growing rich under his government. Yet that London was neither a stately nor large city, is evident from an order but two years before,—that the houses abutting on the best streets should be covered with tiles, or stone, instead of thatch. And also from the fact that, adjoining to Cheapside, was then a void space, called the Crown Field. London bridge, however, such as it still exists, had been lately finished*; and might well seem to the king a

* In 1212.

magnificent structure, though the passage over it was very narrow; the present pathways being then occupied by houses and shops. Henry's peevish remark was followed up by but too many attempts, on his part, to extort money from the Londoners. No excuse was too frivolous for him to employ. Thus, when some young courtiers going to see the citizens at their sports, chose to laugh rudely at their awkwardness, and call them "a set of clownish soap-boilers," for which the persons so abused turned upon them, and sent them back to Westminster severely threshed, the king took advantage of this to lay a fine of nearly 3000*l.* upon the city.

The pope's excuses for draining England of money were often quite as unreasonable as this, and it was very difficult for the barons to prevent their being successful. For when he chose to direct any demands to the clergy, requiring them to send him a certain portion of their incomes, their fear of being deprived of all their profits by his interdicts or excommunications, and their terror of being under his curse, generally prevented their daring to resist his orders. But, besides the revenue which thus flowed into the papal treasury with the reluctant consent of the contributors, the popes managed to draw still larger sums out of the country, to enrich their dependents, by the wicked expedient of bestowing English benefices on the Italians living in their court. Thus did the pope, who called himself the chief shepherd of the flock of Christ, commit the charge of his sheep to hirelings, who cared not for them. The value of the rents and tythes thus given to foreigners, were calculated to amount, in the year 1245, to 60,000 marks, or 171,000*l.* being more than the whole revenue of the crown. Against this abuse the barons remonstrated in vain, though they represented to the pope that the country must be reduced to poverty, if such an annual drain of its wealth was continued; that the persons whom

he promoted could not teach a people of whose language they were ignorant; that in the benefices thus conferred, there was no relief for the poor, no hospitality maintained; that the repairs of all such churches were entirely neglected, and the parsonages falling down; that there was no decent celebration of divine worship; no preaching of the word of God; no care taken of the souls of men.

In an address to Innocent IV. for relief from these grievances, the haughty nobles of England condescended to say, "We humbly and devoutly implore you, reverend Father, as you hope for the rewards of heaven, to deign to listen with pity to our voices, calling on you to apply some wholesome remedy to the sufferings of a king and kingdom, thus injured and oppressed, otherwise we must look out for relief in some other way; though our reverence for the seat of the apostles has, hitherto, restrained us." In this cry to their oppressor, the king and prelates joined.

Alas! why did they not, indeed, seek relief in another way; even that simple way, of turning to the word of God, to see whether He had required all nations to bow down thus before one man? There they would have found the Holy Spirit proclaiming, before-hand, by the writing of that apostle whom the popes declared to be superior to all other apostles and evangelists, that *false teachers* would arise in the Church, bringing in by stealth pernicious heresies, and that they might be known, among other signs, by this, *Through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you**. But the men of this age knew not what their fathers before them had neglected, the precious promise made by Christ, saying, *If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free†*. Wherefore; as a foolish

* 2 Pet. ii. 1. 3.

† John viii. 31, 32.

people, they were given up to be bewitched, that they should not *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*; but should be *entangled with the yoke of bondage**.

When the pope had received their remonstrance and petition, and heard that the king had prevented the raising of money for his use, he was very angry; and talked of forbidding the celebration of public worship throughout all England. But, being dissuaded from this by an English cardinal then at the papal court, and pleased with a submissive message from the weak king, he contented himself with sending over one of those official letters called *bulls*; with a short and vague promise of amendment, and a demand for a twentieth part of the rents of all the benefices in England.

To other similar remonstrances the pope replied, that the rights of the laity certainly ought not to be injured, and should be so no more; and that, as for the native clergy, who might regard themselves as injured by his preferring foreigners, if they would endeavour to deserve his approbation, they should find him willing to grant them licences for holding several benefices together. Thus did he tempt the English clergy to join him in defrauding their countrymen of spiritual instruction. Still the pope would seem to regret, that the persons to whom he had entrusted the care of souls should wholly neglect their duty. And accordingly, as if urged by the desire of checking this gross abuse, he ordered, that if any minister was not resident on his cure for six months, at the least, in the year, half the income of the benefice should be forfeited for the use of the Roman empire; that is, should be paid to a papal officer, for the purpose of enabling the pope to spend it in encouraging rebellion against an emperor, who would not submit to be imposed upon as

* Gal. v. 1.

Henry was. Thus were the barons and prelates of England mocked, and their complaints were turned into an excuse for the pope's claiming half the spoils, of which those false shepherds, whom he had thrust into its fold, annually fleeced the English nation. But if the pope had signed a convention, never to obtrude another Italian priest upon the country, no confidence could prudently have been placed upon any such document. For he had, of late, taken upon him to issue writs, in which it was declared that the order therein contained must be obeyed; all previous agreements, charters, and privileges, *notwithstanding*. From the Latin for this last word, these writs were said to have a *non-obstante* clause.

This way of issuing despotic orders, and declaring that no law, or other document, or custom, should be sufficient excuse for not complying with them, was soon imitated by the ministers of the king. Such orders struck at the root of all justice. For when a man appeared in the courts of law to claim any thing as his just due, it mattered not that his right was properly undeniable, so long as the king could send a writ ordering the court to proceed after a certain manner, "all charters, or customs to the contrary *notwithstanding*." An honest judge, Roger de Thurkeby, when the first of these *non obstante* orders was presented before him, as from the king, exclaimed, "Alas, alas! I have for some time expected this. The civil court is now polluted like the ecclesiastical; and poison from a sulphureous source has corrupted the stream of justice." The evil, thus begun, was never quite got rid of till the Revolution of 1688.

But whilst the barons only remonstrated, or petitioned, or tried to keep the pope's writs from reaching them, by issuing orders to stop his messengers from landing, one resolute and well-meaning man, *Robert Grostete*, bishop of Lincoln, openly

set not only the pope's non-obstante orders, but even his excommunications, at defiance.

This person was one of the most remarkable characters of the age. Born at Stowe in Lincolnshire, of parents too obscure to help him forward by any family interest, his thirst for knowledge led him to seek instruction at Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris. In these different seats of learning he distinguished himself amongst the foremost scholars; and, besides attaining to such an acquaintance with the sciences, as made the ignorant people about him think he must be a magician, Grostete got access to the Greek and Hebrew tongues; and was thus enabled to study both the Old and New Testament in their original languages. As he was a ready writer, and delighted to make his conversation improving, the extensiveness of his knowledge became very generally known; and the great rarity of such learning, in those days, gained him a high reputation.

When nearly sixty years old he was chosen bishop of Lincoln, by the dean and chapter; and straightway resolved to begin doing his utmost to reform his diocese.

The difficulties before him would have made a less zealous man think himself excused, and a less stout-hearted one shrink in despair, from attempting so hopeless a task. The diocese, which is now one of the largest in England, was then still larger. Some of the benefices in it had been given, by the pope, to men who were not in holy orders, on the promise that they would become priests. But they kept the profits of their benefices, and continued laymen. Others were held by foreigners, most of them unacquainted with the English language, and many of them residing abroad at the papal court. Among the native and resident clergy, a preaching minister was scarcely to be found. The monks were idle and dissolute; and confident that their

privileges put it out of the bishop's power to enquire into, much more to punish, their misconduct. If Grostete looked to those superiors who should have assisted him, the prospect was perhaps still more discouraging. Archbishop Edmund was defeated in projects for improvement which stopped short of his own; and deserted his post from a melancholy conviction that success was unattainable. And the next primate, Boniface, was more fit to have been a priest of the heathen god Mars, or of Odin, than to bear authority in the church of Christ. The weakness of the king's character, and his willingness to regard himself as but the vassal of the pope, must have prevented the bishop from hoping for any steady assistance from him. Still there was the pope; whom Grostete too ignorantly regarded as sitting in the chair of the Apostles. But what could he expect from the court of Rome, seeing that his projects of reform were directed against abuses encouraged by, or proceeding immediately from, the popes themselves.

The good bishop, however, had been brought, by the mercy of God, to think that "they who take the salary of a pastoral office, out of the milk and wool of those sheep of Christ's flock whom they should lead to life and salvation, and yet defraud them of the pastoral care, and of their spiritual food, are guilty before Christ of the murder of souls. And that he who, being entrusted with authority over others, permits such ill shepherds, is still more to be condemned than they." Hence, instead of being deterred either by the apparent hopelessness of the undertaking, or by the consideration of his own advanced age, Grostete entered on his duties like one who, to use his own words, "dare not, for the love of God, do otherwise than zealously discharge his holy functions."

This principle upheld the bishop under painful trials and *disappointments*; making him most anxious

to be the character he drew for his clergy to copy after; a servant of God “whom no prejudice, gift, entreaty, or partiality, turns aside from the path of uprightness; who delights in his labour; and whose whole desire is to profit souls.”

! Grostete seems indeed to have had none to second or to help him, except the *mendicant friars*; on whose assistance he set a high value, till he detected their worldly views. These friars were of two orders, Dominicans and Franciscans. The first had their name from Dominic their founder, a Spaniard, who was amongst the earliest that tempted the erring Church to be *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus* *; summoning the prelates and nobles of France to the slaughter of their Albigensian brethren; and persuading Innocent III. to establish that horrid tribunal the Inquisition, for the discovery and punishment of all such as, coming to the knowledge of the Gospel, rejected the errors of the Church of Rome. The Franciscans were likewise so called from their founder; a shameless impostor, who having wounded his skin so as to imitate the marks of those wounds which our Saviour suffered at his crucifixion, had the audacity to pass them off, upon the superstitious and credulous, as marks stamped on his body by our Lord himself to do him peculiar honour. Dominic had that passionate eloquence, which consists in expressing strongly violent feelings; whilst Francis with a more winning hypocrisy crept into the hearts of his ignorant hearers. That artful person, Innocent III., was glad therefore to take advantage of the ambition of these two unhappy sinners to continue their name; and encouraged them, with all the weight of his authority, to form a body of followers, who should serve the Church in a more effectual manner than either the paro-

chial clergy or the monks. Both Dominic and Francis were allowed to teach, that whosoever enlisted himself into the number of their associates, became thereby a favourite of heaven; and was sure of salvation, if he complied with the rules of his order. By boldly asserting these things, they deceived many humble penitents, who felt the weight of their sins, and their own utter inability to work out their salvation. Had such persons been taught, that *we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings**; and that *all the good works that we can do must ever be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our justification, which doth come freely by the mere mercy of God†*, this most wholesome doctrine, being very full of comfort, might have won their hearts to the love of Christ, who suffered that salvation might thus be brought within the reach of man; and *the love of Christ* would have constrained them to seek to fulfil His law, and obey Him in all things. But the thankfulness of a friar for deliverance from the terror of condemnation, was turned into another channel. He was led to believe, that the pardon of his sins was obtained by the merits of the founder of his order, and that implicit compliance with the founder's rules was the condition of his pardon. Hence both gratitude and interest bound him to the rules of his society; and those rules demanded, as the devices of men for earning admission into heaven always have done, far more painful sacrifices than He who *is love‡* has chosen to require of His creatures. They who became friars were to bind themselves to have neither wife, nor home, nor purse; and were to go without a murmur, wherever the superior of their order should command, begging

* Eleventh Article.

† Homily III. Of the Salvation of all mankind.

‡ 1 John iv. 16.

their bread as they went ; and preaching such doctrines as he should allow of, but most especially submission to the pope.

These voluntary privations were partly repaid by the admiration of the blind crowd, who poured their gifts at the feet of the friars, without waiting to be asked ; so that though both these orders continued to be called mendicant, or begging brethren, they soon invented pretexts for holding, as a community, the wealth collected by individual friars, or bequeathed by rich sinners to purchase their prayers for the testator's soul. When this change in their constitution had received the pope's sanction, spiritual pride, and the pride of wealth, idleness, and a fondness for wandering, might each be gratified by turning friar. Hence they became so numerous in popish countries, that, as lately as the last century, there were ascertained to be above 140,000 Franciscans, inhabiting nearly 8000 convents.

But when the friars had been but a little while established, they could only subsist by winning favour ; it was therefore necessary for them to endeavour to excel the older orders in every way that could gain the attachment of the people. The monks and the priests had lost the esteem and respect of the laity, by too generally resembling them in their vices and their ignorance, and by neglecting to preach. So the friars, in addition to their apparent denial of self, sought to distinguish themselves by the acquirement of learning ; and called the people together, wherever they went, to work upon their feelings by animated addresses, delivered either from the pulpit, or in the open air. Besides this, whilst the new orders were really, as well as professedly, quite without property, they who entered them would, for the most part, be such as *had a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. Being ignorant of God's righteousness, they were for going about to establish their own righte-*

ousness*. Yet, when their zeal led them to study the word of God, it would be blest, in some at least, to the bringing forth of better fruits than the unhappy founders of these orders ever dreamed of producing.

Hence Bishop Grostete found, amongst the friars, several whose views of religion were, at any rate, as clear as his own. For he was not so raised above the ignorance of his age as to be free from much lamentable superstition; but believed that a phial sent to King Henry, by the monks of Palestine, who dealt largely in such frauds, contained some of the very blood which our Lord shed upon the cross. And when the king called his nobles and prelates together, to bow down before the contents of the phial, and to accompany him in a solemn procession, with the priests in their richest vestments, bearing flags and lighted tapers, whilst ^{A.D. 1247.} he walked from St. Paul's to Westminster Abbey, carrying the phial in his hands on high by the way, and round the church and chambers of his palace, Grostete was not only consenting to this folly, but exerted himself to confirm the blindness of some, who, till they listened to him, thought it to be folly. Whereas, had the contents of the phial been even what he too easily believed, the bishop should have taught his countrymen how such carnal thoughts, respecting the material body of Christ, were rebuked by our Lord himself, saying, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*†.

But there are different degrees of light imparted by one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will‡. And if any man faithfully employ the gift he has received from that blessed source, to the honour of God, and urged by love for Christ, his case may be confidently expected to come under the merciful rule, that *if there*

* Rom. x. 2, 3.

† John vi. 63.:

‡ 1 Cor. xii. 11.

be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not *. With that willing mind Grostete laboured in his diocese; visiting the different quarters of it in company with some friars, who felt as he did, the duty of awakening the parochial clergy, and the people, from that brutish ignorance into which they were almost universally fallen. In every rural deanery the neighbours were summoned to meet together, at a fixed time and place; the bishop delivered a charge to the clergy, and confirmed the children; one of the friars preached to the people; and three or four others were employed in hearing their confessions, and enjoining what they thought suitable penance. After this the bishop still kept his clergy together, for a day or two more, to ask them questions about their respective flocks, and to consider and decide upon such cases of ecclesiastical discipline, as it was in his power to regulate. He was told by some, that this way of proceeding was too much of an innovation. But the bishop replied, "Every innovation whereby men are rightly instructed, helped forward, and put in the way towards being perfect, is a blessed innovation."

The clergy might dislike having their indolence disturbed, and their negligence rebuked, but they could only complain and submit. With the monks Grostete had more difficulties to contend against. When he insisted on visiting their monasteries, and enquiring into the conduct of the inmates, they produced charters from different popes, granting them exemption from his jurisdiction. But he resolutely denied the right of the popes to exempt the members of any church from the controul of their proper diocesan. And when the Abbot of Bardney refused admission to some clergy sent by Grostete, to examine into the affairs of that monastery, he called

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

together a provincial synod, and deposed the abbot. For this the bishop was himself excommunicated, with the wicked curses then usual, by the monks of Canterbury, who were constantly making some new assumption of authority. They had the farther insolence to send a message, with a letter, bearing their seal, and requiring the bishop to consider himself as thereby suspended from all episcopal functions. But Grostete trampled their letter under his feet, to the amazement of the bystanders; for the image of Becket, on the convent seal, was regarded by them with such idolatrous veneration, that they would as soon have dared to trample on the cross. Not satisfied with this mark of his contempt, Grostete declared, in very unmeasured terms, his confidence that *the curse causeless shall not come**. And he insisted that his terrified domestics should turn the priest, who brought the writ of excommunication, out of the house.

In this behaviour there was evidently too much of unholy anger, but yet it was useful; for it helped to loosen the superstitious bondage in which the people around him were held, by their terror of excommunications, however improperly issued.

But besides endeavouring to oblige the monks to live agreeably to their rules, the bishop made an effort to check them in a practice, the evils of which are felt at this day. Where the patronage of any Church had become the property of a monastery, the monks collected the tythes; not however for the benefit of the minister, as originally intended, but for the use of their convent. And instead of supplying the parish with a rector, as a lay patron must have done, they had the service performed by the cheapest deputy they could hire; seldom allowing him any other salary than what he could make by gathering the tythes of such kinds of produce, as

* Prov. xxvi. 2.

were of too little value to be worth the expence of conveying them to the, perhaps, distant monastery. This deputy was called, by a term borrowed from the Latin, a vicar. Grostete justly considered such an appropriation of the great tythes as a fraud both on the parishioners and on the officiating minister; and he succeeded in procuring by agents a bull from the pope, authorizing him to prevent the monks from thus abusing their power as patrons. His agents brought him a very heavy charge for expences incurred in procuring this bull, for which they had spent a considerable sum in bribing the papal court.

But the religious orders were too powerful to be thus driven to resign what formed a very large portion of their incomes. The Templars, in particular, refused most positively to let the parochial clergy have the tythes of their estates; and, by bribing in their turn, they got the pope to sanction their refusal. On finding this, Grostete set off in person for the papal court; being unwilling to make use of the agency of others, who might again take upon them to use the same ill method as before, for obtaining a decision in his favour.

Having arrived in Innocent's presence, the honest Englishman said to him, "Holy father I have been put to shame, in consequence of my relying on your letters and promises. The persons, whom I had expected to reduce to order, are allowed to evade the authority you gave me." "Brother," replied the pope with an angry look, "What is that to thee? You have delivered your own soul; and we have been gracious to them." "*Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*" With such effrontery did the pope employ the word of God to cover his iniquity. But Grostete, heaving a deep sigh, exclaimed in an under tone, yet so as to be distinctly heard, "O money, money, what power thou hast; especially in the Roman court!" At this bold rebuke, Innocent,

much exasperated, said, "What wretches these English are! Every one of them longs to grind and impoverish his neighbour. How many members of the religious orders, men intent on prayer and hospitality, do you wish to oppress, that you may gratify your tyrannical disposition, and supply your own covetous desires out of their property?"

Shocked at such an unmerited reproach Grostete withdrew, amidst the scoffs of the pope's attendants. But how hardened must the heart of Innocent have been, and how shameless his front, when he, who had fleeced the English nation beyond all precedent, dared to speak thus to a bishop from whom, but three years before, he had attempted to extort the then enormous sum of 13,000*l.*, without any plausible pretext. Neither could the pope well have forgotten, that when Grostete had boldly rebuked two Franciscans for consenting to be bearers of such a requisition, he himself, instead of repenting that he had wearied out the devotion of a people foolishly submissive to his dictates, had sent them back to demand still more, from every English prelate who had rejected their first application; and to insist on receiving these sums, "every privilege to the contrary notwithstanding."

It might have been hoped, that after wrongfully accusing Bishop Grostete of being influenced by covetousness, the pope would at least have so conducted himself in all future transactions with that prelate, as not to let the bishop see him swerving again from the plain path of duty to enrich his own family. Yet scarcely had a year passed before Innocent, wishing to make up an income for a nephew, who was still but a boy, sent Grostete word that this young Italian must have the first piece of preferment that should become vacant in the cathedral of Lincoln; and warned him, that any other disposal of it should be adjudged null and void. To this order the pope annexed his usual clause, that

any parties concerned in disobeying it should be excommunicated, all customs or privileges to the contrary *notwithstanding* !

On receiving this order Grostete wrote a letter to the prelate, through whom it had been sent, which contained the following expressions. " I would obey the commands of the apostolic see with filial affection. But its commands cannot possibly be such as would be opposed to what the apostles and their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, have taught. Now the tenor of the order sent to me is very widely opposed to apostolic holiness. For the *non-obstante* clause*, contained in it, produces a flood of falsehood, fraud, and shameless injustice. After the sins of Lucifer and Antichrist, there can be no sin more directly opposed to what the apostles teach, than that of conspiring to ruin the souls of men, by defrauding them of the pastoral care. It is impossible, therefore, that the apostolic see, whose power has been given to it by our Lord for edification, and not to destroy, should command or require any thing so hateful to Christ, so detestable in itself, and so pernicious to mankind. I therefore, wishing to behave as a faithful and obedient son, do refuse to obey, and am determined to oppose, so exceedingly wicked an order, as I cannot believe to have really proceeded from the apostolic see !"

When the contents of Grostete's letter were made known to the pope, he could not conceal his rage. " Who," said he, " is this delirious doting old man, who dares so presumptuously to judge my conduct ? By Peter and Paul, I would make such an example of him, as all the world should talk of, if my natural generosity did not restrain me." By the advice of his cardinals, however, who knew both Grostete's firmness, and the great respect with which he was regarded in England, the pope proceeded no farther

* See p. 29.

than suspending the bishop ; under which sentence he conducted himself as if he held it to be of not the least weight.

Grostete was now rapidly approaching the end of his days. Being conscious of this, he sent for John de St. Giles, a Franciscan, with whom he could freely converse on the state of the Church, and to whom he was anxious to give his last advice. He said to the Franciscan that his brethren had disappointed him, by not telling the great their faults with that freedom, which he had hoped for from the members of an order bound to poverty, and therefore not tempted to flatter. "What," said the bishop, "is your definition of heresy?" To which, when St. Giles hesitated replying, Grostete subjoined, "I define it thus. It is an opinion chosen on carnal grounds, contrary to Scripture, openly taught, and obstinately defended. Now to think that the care of souls may be entrusted to a boy, unfit for the office both from age and ignorance, is an opinion taken up from carnal motives, and for worldly ends. It is contrary to Scripture, which forbids the appointing of shepherds unfit to drive off the wolf. It is openly taught ; for it is written in letters, sealed and stamped as bulls. And it is obstinately defended ; for if any one speaks against it, he is suspended and excommunicated. Now he, in whom that which bears all these marks is found, cannot but be a heretic ; and whosoever can raise his voice against him, and does not, is guilty of sin. Wherefore the pope, if he desist not from such offences, and your brethren, if they warn him not of his guilt, will merit eternal condemnation. And the Decretal says, that the pope may and ought to be accused, if such a fault as heresy be seen in him."

In another conversation with his chaplains, the bishop sighed over the ruin of souls, occasioned by the covetousness of the papal court. "Christ," said he, "came into the world to save souls. Does

not that man, therefore, deserve to be called Anti-christ, who is not afraid to destroy them? In six days the Lord made the whole earth, but He went through more than thirty years of labour to restore man from his fallen state. Is not the destroyer of souls, therefore, an enemy to Christ and to God? Many other popes have afflicted the Church; but this one has enslaved it more than any before him. He has been an encourager of Italian usurers, and has farmed out to laymen the power of releasing crusaders from their vows. I have seen a letter from the pope, in which directions were given for granting indulgences of a length in proportion to the money paid down*. And not only has he commanded the prelates to bestow benefices on persons who neither knew our language, nor intended to dwell in our country; but in one instance he has, out of worldly partiality, allowed a person to hold a bishopric without becoming a bishop; taking its revenues, for years, with the title of bishop elect only†. The Church is indeed under Egyptian bondage to a court in which reign covetousness, usury, simony, robbery, and every kind of luxury and lust. And it will never be delivered, but by the edge of a sword that must be steeped in blood."

Had it pleased the Lord to have put it into his heart, this bishop might have maintained an advantageous warfare against popery, with a bloodless sword, which gives life where it wounds; even *the*

* By an Indulgence the Roman Catholics sometimes mean a permission to omit certain acts of penance; at others, a grant of exemption from a certain quantity of future punishment. For the popes have the audacity to pretend, that they are authorized to bestow such grants of exemption, at their pleasure, on persons still alive. In these grants they certify, what are the sins whose punishment shall thereby be done away with; or how many days of suffering the deluded purchaser of the indulgence was to be relieved from. It was of the last kind of indulgence that Grostete spoke.

† He here alluded to the king's half-brother, Aymar de Valence, bishop elect of Winchester,

word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit *. But that sword was as yet shut up in its scabbard. The Scriptures had not been translated into English; so that only the learned could look into them. If Bishop Grostete had applied his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew to the blessed task of giving his countrymen the Bible in their own tongue, the employment would doubtless have given him a clearer view of the truth; and might have shed the light of day upon our Goshen, instead of that Egyptian darkness, which he felt, but saw not how to remedy.

But God in His wisdom thought fit to let that light be still withheld for a while. Many events were yet to be made to work together, towards preparing the nation to give it a more willing and general reception. Grostete fulfilled the part allotted to him, in bearing such strong testimony to the guilt of the papal court; and, having shewn himself equally honest and resolute in reproofing the king for his violations of the charter, this patriotic churchman expired at Buckden, Oct. 9, 1253.

The death of Grostete deprived the king of the only prelate for whom he could feel sufficient respect to make him reverence his advice, and feel ashamed at his rebuke. In this very year four other prelates had been deputed, by parliament, to remonstrate with the king for his frequent violations of Magna Charta; and they had dwelt particularly on his disregard of the allowed privileges of the Church. The bishops chosen to deliver this remonstrance, were those of Carlisle, Salisbury, and Winchester, with the Archbishop of Canterbury; and they appear to have been fixed upon, because of their supposed influence with Henry, either from relationship, or long attendance about his person. But little as Henry was given to reflection, even he could perceive how unfit the bearers of this mea-

* *Eph. vi. 17.*

sage were, to propose his putting himself under their guidance. "I am but too conscious," said he to them, "that I have acted very wrongly towards the Church in some instances; particularly in forcing the cathedral chapters * to elect very unfit persons, for bishops. You, Archbishop Boniface, may perhaps recollect the means I employed for raising you to the see of Canterbury. And you, William, who served me in procuring some decisions rather against justice, were therefore made Bishop of Salisbury. Sylvester of Carlisle, you were, a long time, a very humble attendant on my chaplains, when I so improperly raised you to a bishopric, over the heads of many learned divines. And as for you Aymar, my brother, I confess my deplorable misconduct, in bribing some of the monks, and compelling others to vote you bishop elect of Winchester, when your age, and want of learning, would have made it more expedient to have given you a schoolmaster. I beg of you, therefore, to assist me in correcting the evil I have done, by penitently resigning those rich sees of which you so iniquitously got possession; and henceforward I will make it my care to promote none but the worthy."

To this rebuke the prelates could only make the very poor reply; That they did not desire to speak of the past, but to consider the future.

It was indeed most fitting that both they and their king should fix their thoughts upon the future; and not merely on the shortlived future, which they were still to pass on earth; but upon that future which was to begin with their departure from this life, and is now, after six hundred years have passed, no nearer to its close. If Henry had been capable of thinking justly of that eternal futurity, he would have trembled at the reflection, that his own words proved him to have been intentionally a cor-

* Chapter means the assembled clergy of a cathedral.

rupter of the Church, placing wicked men in its highest offices for private ends; and that he must one day give an account of this abuse of his power to that God who gave it, and to an all-seeing Judge *who loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, holy and without blemish* *. But as the men of those times saw, that a belief in the day of judgment appeared to have but little influence towards the prevention of crimes; and knew not that this proceeded from the deadness of their faith; they invented various devices for adding to its terrors, by loading the sentence against particular offences with imaginary aggravations. Thus the king was requested, a few days after this conversation, to give the parliament farther security for his observing Magna Charta; by joining anew in the excommunication of all its violators. Each bishop held a torch, as the terrible curses were pronounced; and Henry was desired to do the like; but he shuddered, and excused himself from taking one; observing, that he was no priest. Yet he laid his hand upon his heart, and said, "So help me God, I will observe all the articles of this charter, as I am a man, a Christian, a knight, and a crowned and anointed king." And then the bells were struck; and the torches were blown out, and cast to the ground; and every one present exclaimed, "So may the souls of those who shall deserve to fall under this condemnation, stink, and be extinguished in hell."

Knowing, as the bishops did, that their weak sovereign was too likely to break his oaths on the first temptation, they would have been much better employed in heartily beseeching the Lord so to replenish him with the grace of His Holy Spirit; that he might be always inclined to the will of God;

* Eph. v. 25. 27.

than in setting him the example of violating that command which says, *Bless, and curse not* *.

But the king had been so wasteful, that his wants now tempted him to collect money by every means within his reach, however unjust or contrary to his solemn oaths. To supply his household, he made seizures from the merchants' stores; and he even carried off, from Durham cathedral, the sums of money which different persons had deposited there under the supposed guardianship of Cuthbert, its patron saint; as in a bank which none would dare to rob. The king had also sold to his brother Richard, a licence to levy fines on the Jews, and to extort money from them on a variety of other pretexts. Besides this, he had taken upon him the vow of a crusader; with no other intention than to gain thereby an excuse for obtaining authority from the papal court, to demand a tenth of all the clergy received. And though already so involved as to be driven to these miserable expedients, the vain expectation of seeing his second son Edmund made king of Sicily by the pope, led Henry to pledge himself to pay over to the latter such sums, as made his debts amount to near 700,000*l*. The royal treasurer, who was a foreigner, though also possessed of the English bishopric of Hereford;

A.D. 1255. went abroad to arrange with the pope, for removing part of this debt to other men's shoulders, from whom he would be more likely to get the money. By the advice of this bishop the pope issued notices to certain bishops and abbots of this realm, telling them that he owed so many marks to such and such Italian merchants, and the money having been spent for the benefit of the church and kingdom of England, he had undertaken that the said prelates should repay, to the within named Italians, such sums as they were required by this present notice.

* Rom. xii. 14.

In this way 500 marks were demanded of the convent of Durham, and 400 from the monks and abbot of Croyland. The former stoutly refused to pay, and were pardoned ; but the latter, more afraid of resisting the pope, submitted to the extortion.

When the papal nuncio addressed the nobility in parliament, "to take their share also of the debt, which," he said, "his master had incurred by the desire, and for the benefit of their king," they expressed their very great astonishment at the extent of the demand ; and declared, that it was grievous to hear how the kingdom was harassed, through the helpless simplicity of one man. Being further urged for supplies, they gave the king an unsparing rebuke ; and henceforward treated him as a person utterly unfit to manage affairs of state.

On the third day of the sitting of parliament, Henry entering the hall, found the barons in complete armour. He started at the sight, and exclaimed, "Am I then your prisoner?"—"No, Sir," replied the Earl Marshal ; "but you and your favourites have made the kingdom miserable. Wherefore we demand, that a certain number of barons and prelates be appointed, with authority to redress all grievances." The visible strength of the party, arrayed against him, alarmed the king ; and when the barons promised to consider what could be done towards paying his debts, he willingly consented to all that was required of him.

A proclamation was, accordingly, drawn up in the king's name, to inform the nation that a council had been chosen, by himself and the parliament, whose commands all men were to obey. It is worth notice, that copies of this proclamation were sent to the sheriffs in the language and character used by the Saxons of Alfred's age, as well as in Norman French.

The number of persons to whom sovereign authority was thus given, amounted to fifteen ; and

Boniface, archbishop of Canterbury, was placed at their head. But the man of greatest reputation amongst them, for valour and abilities, was Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester. He had planned this revolution; having persuaded the irritated nobility to conspire together for the purpose of depriving the king of his power. The earl's authority was therefore paramount in this council; thus his word gave law to England.

This earl of Leicester was a Frenchman by birth. But his elder brother, succeeding to the French estates of their house, had given up to him the English earldom which they inherited from their mother Amicia Beaumont.

The whole family were deeply stained with the blood of the saints. Simon de Montfort, the younger, had taken the command of the crusade sent forth by the Romish church against the church of God amongst the Albigenses. To this he was tempted by the promise of receiving, for his reward, the princely estates of which the count of Toulouse was to be deprived, for not persecuting his faithless subjects. The crusaders found the country of the truly Christian people more prosperous, as the inhabitants were more civilized, than in any other province of France; and they desolated it with sword and with fire; till the murder of tens of thousands, men, women, and children, so terrified the survivors, that they either fled their country or denied their faith. Yet the son of a man laden with the guilt of this crusade, and himself a sharer in its enormities, was chosen to become, by ambition, the instrument of lasting and inestimable benefit to England.

King Henry had encouraged him in the career of pride, by giving him his sister in marriage, and appointing him governor of Guienne, as the Duchy of Aquitaine was now called; and he had been repaid by insolence and ingratitude. But the earl

Leicester soon permitted his design, of ruling both king and nobles, to become so evident, as gave Henry an opportunity of pointing out to his subjects, that the earl's party was solely bent on getting possession of power, and on sharing the highest offices of the state, whilst they cared not to redress any grievances but their own. Yet the king had sworn, faithfully to observe the conditions of the agreement made with this party; but on application to the pope he received permission to break that oath; with an assurance that he need not ^{A.D. 1261.} dread any ill consequences from his violation of it. *An oath for confirmation, says St. Paul, is to men an end of all strife* *. But it can only be so whilst they have reason to believe, that he who has taken the oath will remember what another Scripture teaches, that none may dwell in the presence of the Lord, but such as having *sworn to their own hurt, yet change not* †. It was in direct contradiction to this divine rule, that the pope took upon him to declare Henry at liberty to set aside what he had sworn to observe, lest his royal dignity should receive hurt thereby. The result of the encouragement thus given to perjury was a civil war, in which Henry and his eldest son Prince Edward, Richard king of the Romans and his son Henry, fought on the one side; whilst on the other the earl of Leicester had, for his principal coadjutors, De Clare, earl of Gloucester, and De Spenser, the Justiciary; and was also warmly supported by the Londoners and most of the clergy. In a battle fought under the walls of Lewes, Prince Edward ^{May 14, 1264.} routed his opponents, and pursued them four miles off the field. But his departure had left the line of the royal army broken; so that, when he returned, he found the king, and his uncle

* Heb. vi. 16.

† Psal. xv. 4.

Richard, had been taken prisoners by the more skilful generalship of the earl of Leicester.

To redeem the king from captivity, Edward and his cousin Henry surrendered themselves to Leicester, as hostages for his not employing his liberty to the injury of the earl. But though king Henry thus, apparently, recovered his freedom, he was too much intimidated to refuse Leicester any of his demands; and a fresh commission was issued, empowering the earls of Leicester and Gloucester, and the bishop of Exeter, to name a council of nine persons; to whom all the most important powers of the crown were transferred.

To strengthen his party still farther, the earl of Leicester induced the king to call together a parliament, for fixing the terms on which Prince Edward might be set at liberty. But it was obvious that a parliament such as those which had been accustomed in this reign to rebuke their sovereign with the greatest freedom, would be likely to act with a considerable degree of independent impartiality; and to check the earl's usurpation of the royal authority, as well as the king's indiscreet use of it. Leicester was therefore anxious that the parliament should be so constituted, as to make it probable that a large majority of the members should bend to his influence, or be friendly to his cause. He consequently would only suffer the king to summon twenty-three of the nobles, and twelve bishops. On the other hand no less than a hundred abbots and priors, and five deans received orders to take their seats in parliament; the earl feeling assured that he stood high in their opinion, for his character as a persecutor of the Albigenses, and as a man ostentatiously attentive to all the ceremonies of their church, and yet ready to protect them from those papal exactions with which they had lately been oppressed. The sheriffs were likewise required to cause two knights to attend from

each county. Leicester might think these knights less likely than the greater barons to make a troublesome opposition to the views of a chieftain, whom they saw to be powerful enough to give commands to the king, and to detain his son in confinement. And, besides this, the summoning of certain knights to parliament, from amongst the holders of estates under the crown had already been occasionally practised; and could not reasonably be dispensed with, when the plan of admitting representatives was about to be still further extended. For Leicester, knowing that his party was most popular with those classes who had most felt the want of a powerful interference to shield them from the demands of the pope and the king, had determined on introducing a number of plain citizens and burgesses into parliament.

This had never been done before. The warlike nobles and lordly priests, who were ordinarily assembled to debate on affairs of state, having too great a contempt for the trading inhabitants of towns, to think of consulting their opinion on such questions. But the earl expecting, and needing, the support of their votes, devised the issuing of writs to sundry cities and towns, requiring the presence in parliament of two burgesses from each. And having set this example, at a period when the growth of commerce, and the effect of previous grants of charters, had conspired to raise the towns into importance, the privilege he thus procured for them was never afterwards lost sight of, though some of the poorer boroughs viewed it, for a while, as a burden. Dec. 1264.

In such a manner was that remarkable part of the English constitution established, whereby the people became sharers in the government of their country. This was either never the case, or soon ceased to be so, in every other kingdom throughout the world. The beneficial effects of this peculiarity

in our constitution will gradually unfold themselves. At present it will be sufficient to observe, that the representatives of the commons in parliament have always had an interest in faithfully watching and opposing any inroads upon the liberties of the people; being themselves a part of the people. And that the necessity, which these representatives feel, of securing the good-will of their electors, naturally makes them desirous so to conduct themselves as shall earn the respect and favourable opinion of their constituents; and thus promotes, also, the habit of attending to the wishes of their inferiors; an habit which, if generally diffused, would remove half the evils attendant on the inequality of fortunes.

But whatever the advantages may be, that have arisen from this singularly wise form of government, in which the king, the lords, and the commons, have a suitable part to fulfil, it would be both vanity and ingratitude to boast as if the wisdom of our ancestors had planned that which gives excellency to the whole system, and distinguishes the English constitution from all that have not been formed in imitation of it; viz. the introduction into parliament of a large body of men, not sitting as representatives of the greater or lesser baronage, but of the people. We are undeniably indebted for it to Him alone, who over-ruled the heart of a factious noble, too unprincipled to intend any good; and of a king, too foolish to devise any. By His wise and gracious providence, the craftiness of the one in pursuing his own private ends, and the inconsiderate submission of the other, were made instrumental to the bringing about such an improvement in the English constitution, as the much boasted wisdom of the Greek or Roman statesmen never enabled them to invent. The king was farther obliged to give orders for bringing up his own friends, before the parliament, to answer for their having fought in his army, and at *his bidding*. Thus the sheriff of Hertfordshire re-

ceived a letter from Henry, desiring him to send four knights to Brickendon, with a summons to the king's half-brother, William de Valence, bidding him appear 'to do and receive justice.' And if de Valence should not be forthcoming, the sheriff was to give in the names of the four knights employed, and to exhibit this letter; that the haughty earl might be satisfied that the king had complied with his desire, in writing thus.

When parliament met, however, the king's partizans seem to have kept out of the way. Yet the terms of an agreement, between the earls of Leicester and Gloucester and the citizens of London on the one part, and the king his son and nephew on the other, were drawn up with its sanction, and duly signed; but as subsequent events made it come to nothing, the document would not deserve any notice, were it not for an expression contained in it, which throws some light on a great question debated in the next reign. The expression is as follows: 'And our lord the king, and Monsr. Edward, shall cause these terms to be made sure, as best they can, throughout Ireland, Gascony, the kingdom of Scotland, and all the territories subject to the king of England.' Which words seem clearly to imply, that this parliament regarded the king of England as having a paramount authority over Scotland; just as they would have acknowledged the paramount rights of the king of France, over Henry's continental possessions.

The ambition of Leicester tempted him to keep prince Edward within his power, notwithstanding his consent to this agreement; and so proved the ruin of the earl. For it disgusted several of the English nobility; and one of them, Roger Mortimer, made an arrangement with Edward for covering his escape, which the prince soon effected very adroitly. Being allowed to take the air on May 28,
1265. horseback, without the walls of Hereford

castle, in company with the knights employed by Leicester to watch him; prince Edward encouraged them in running matches, and otherwise trying the speed of their horses; whilst he only paced, or trotted up and down the field, as umpire of sports. His own horse, a particularly fleet animal, sent to him by the earl of Gloucester, was thus got into order for a severe run, whilst the others were all blown; when a person was descried on a neighbouring hill, riding a grey steed, and waving his bonnet. The prince had expected the signal; and telling his attendants, he had had enough of their society, galloped off. They followed him immediately; and, though left more and more behind, continued the chase till, as he approached a wood, they saw Mortimer and a band of armed men rush out of it, and receive the prince with shouts of joy. The Leicestrians then gave up the pursuit; and Edward and his party, crossing the rivers Arrow and Lugg, reached Mortimer's castle at Wigmore in safety.

The poor old king was obliged, on his son's escape, to allow orders to go forth in his name, under the signatures of the two Montforts and of Giles de Argenteyn, calling upon his subjects to arrest his brothers; and requiring the bishops to excommunicate prince Edward and his friends. Such proclamations, however, only served to inform the people that their sovereign, whom they would gladly have supposed to be under the guidance of firmer and wiser counsellors than in times past, was treated as a slave by his keepers. They, therefore, did but dispose the nation to rise in favour of the prince, and assist him in rescuing his father from Leicester's grasp.

The strength of the opposite parties was tried in a great contest at Evesham; where the
 Aug. 4, earl compelled king Henry to appear in
 1265. arms on his side. In the heat of the battle
the king was wounded, and struck from his horse;

but, calling out to his antagonist, ' Hold, fellow, I am Harry of Winchester,' he was heard by his son ; who immediately came up, and had him conveyed out of the field, to a place of safety. The earl of Leicester and his son, Henry de Montfort, were slain in the fight ; and great numbers of others perished, in this unhappy contest between country-men and kinsmen.

The power of the king's adversaries was now quite broken ; and peace might have been entirely restored, had not the royal party reduced a number of bold men to desperation, by voting in parliament, that the estates of all who had fought on Leicester's side, should be confiscated. Hence the kingdom continued to be harassed with war and violence in a great many districts. But a milder order was at length issued by the king, from Oct. 31,
1266. Kenilworth, in which a distinction was made between his opponents ; and they were permitted to redeem their estates on paying seven, five, or one year's value, according to the extent of their past hostility to him. Still a number of the rebels kept possession of the isle of Ely ; but being excommunicated by the pope, and seeing the prince begin to build bridges, and form a road into A.D.
1268. the fens, they gladly accepted the terms of the award of Kenilworth.

The royal authority being thus re-established throughout the kingdom, Henry was wisely counselled by his son, to imitate some of Leicester's most popular measures. He accordingly in his turn, summoned both the barons and Nov. 19,
1269. the commons to a parliament held at Marlborough ; and consented to the enactment of a number of laws for redressing such evils as were most complained of, and to a renewed confirmation of the great Charter.

These arrangements were scarcely completed, when *prince Edward*, who was but too fond of war,

took upon him to perform, in his father's stead, the vow which he had long ago made, of visiting the Holy Land as a crusader. Louis IX. of France, who was most sincerely anxious to save from the Mahometan yoke, what little still remained of those conquests to which the earlier crusaders had given the name of 'The kingdom of Jerusalem,' rejoiced at the prospect of having so brave a companion; and supplied the English prince with a loan of 70,000 livres, to make the necessary preparations for his voyage.

In the summer of 1270, Edward began his journey towards Palestine; taking with him his wife, Eleanor, daughter of Alfonso, king of Castile, in Spain; and his cousin Henry, son of the king of the Romans. But, before they could join the French armament, king Louis was dead of a dysentery; and his successor, Philip, returning immediately homeward, was accompanied by this young prince Henry, as far as

Mar. 13, 1271. Viterbo, in Italy. There the latter, being at mass, was murdered in the church by his

cousins*, Simon and Guy de Montfort; who having been banished from England, thus took their base revenge. Edward, however, still proceeded, and arrived in safety at Acre. Having no more than about a thousand followers, he could do very little; yet the remembrance of his predecessor, king Richard's valour, made the Turks dread to meet him in battle. The Emir of Joppa, at the instigation of the Sultan of Babylon, affected such respect for Edward's reputation, as to be willing to turn Christian at his desire. This served the Emir as an excuse for sending a messenger, with a request, that he might be admitted to converse in private with the English prince. Edward was resting on a couch, unarmed, in the heat of the day; and the Mahometan aiming a blow at his heart, wounded

* See page 48.

him in the arm with which he parried the stroke. The resolute and active young prince, however, closed with the assassin; and, flinging June 18,
1272. him on the ground, slew him with his own dagger.

It was taken for granted that the dagger was poisoned; so that prince Edward's death was still thought quite certain; unless some one would suck the poison from the wound, and thus perish to save him. In the full belief that such would be the consequence, the princess Eleanor applied her lips to her husband's wounded arm. She suffered nothing from this, as the notion that the Turks employed poisoned weapons, was but an ignorant prejudice; and her faithful affection was rewarded by seeing him recover, and by his conviction that he owed his life to her willingness to die for him.

The Sultan, after this, thought it desirable to induce Edward to quit Palestine, by offering to the Christians of Acre a ten years' truce. It was evident to the English prince that, with the small force at his command, he could not hope to obtain a greater advantage for them by combating, than such a respite; so he accepted the truce, and set off on his return home. In Italy he heard of his father's death; and his tears, on receiving the news, surprised the ambitious brother of Louis IX., who would willingly have lost his nearest relation, to become, like Edward, a king.

Henry III. had found his health so rapidly declining, that he had sent to recall the prince. Whilst he was in this weak state, the news of his nephew's being murdered at Viterbo, his brother Richard's death, and reports of his son's assassination, had so shattered him, that he sunk under his affliction, and died at Westminster, November 16th, 1272, in the fifty-seventh year of his reign, and the sixty-seventh of his age.

A careful observer of events, during this long

reign, would doubtless have often regretted that it had not pleased God to give the country a wiser king. And yet a sovereign full of worldly wisdom, pursuing, in all his measures, that course which such wisdom must have suggested, would not have been so great a blessing to the nation as Henry was made to be. His mismanagement had compelled him to become a petitioner to his people for grants of money, which he was not bold enough, or not powerful enough, to extort in sufficient quantities by other means. And thus the Nobles, and latterly the Commons also, became habituated to claim a right to enquire into the measures of Government, and to exercise a certain control over its proceedings. A wiser king would not have suffered the pope to drain so large a revenue from England, nor to bestow its benefices upon foreigners. But the barefaced manner in which the papal court abused its influence, and the length of time during which one pope after another was permitted to exhibit himself to the English, as greedy of lucre, and careless about the souls of men, was most beneficial to the nation, by strengthening that disgust which the very name of Rome had begun to excite amongst the good as well as the selfish. A monk has left it on record, that most persons began to lose all expectation of seeing a devout pope; and that such as wished to have the pope thought a good man, could only allege, that they believed him to be exceedingly imposed upon by those at whose suggestions he issued his decrees.

Besides this, however advantageous it certainly was to the English that their sovereign should not be, at the same time, the most powerful prince in France, there can be no doubt but that the sovereign would deem his personal interest concerned in recovering the inheritance of his predecessors. So that if Henry III. had been more skilled in worldly policy, he would have employed his sagacity in

schemes and wars to regain or extend the possessions once held in France, by his father king John. Whereas being foiled in one or two attempts by his own folly, Henry was content to go on in the less troublesome career of peace. And the surrounding nations, seeing they had nothing to fear from his ambition, were ready to cultivate his friendship.

Alexander III. king of Scotland, was married, whilst yet but a boy, to his daughter Margaret; and the Scotch allowed king Henry to act as a paramount lord, in settling the regency of Scotland; during his son-in-law's minority.

Llewellyn, the chieftain of North Wales, was also connected with Henry by marriage; having taken to wife a base-born daughter of king John. But, though not unkindly used by Henry, he was the worst neighbour the English had; for he encouraged his people in violence, whilst the king was too irresolute to prevent his vassals from redressing their own real, or imagined, wrongs by force. So that the contiguous counties of England and Wales were frequently harassed by petty wars, carried on with atrocities as foolish as they were wicked; for each act of cruelty tempted some poor sinner to revenge it with a worse. At length the provocations he had received from the Welsh, made Henry march such an army into their country, as they were unable to resist. David and Llewellyn, grandsons of the Llewellyn first mentioned, were obliged to beg for mercy; to confess themselves vassals of the king of England; and to promise, that they would serve him, in any future wars, with five hundred of their subjects.

In Ireland the Norman families, who had shared the country out amongst them, went on extending their conquests; whilst their unambitious sovereign received voluntary acknowledgments of vassalage, and promises of tribute from two of its native princes, Donald king of Thomond, and Felim

O'Connor king of Connaught; who offered their submission to Henry in the vain hope, that he could protect them from the rapacity of his unprincipled subjects, the Mount Morris' and De Burghs.

Of the continental sovereigns, the most powerful and ablest, Frederic emperor of Germany, married Henry's sister; and behaved to him like a friendly kinsman; though the emperor could not but complain that the popes, who did all they could to stir up his subjects to rebellion, were allowed, by Henry, to order the English prelates to pronounce their curses against him.

A Parisian priest, who received Pope Innocent's commands to do the same, refused to act so contrary to his judgment. On the appointed day, this man stood up in his place, and said, 'Hear all people. I have been ordered solemnly to excommunicate, with bell and candle, the emperor Frederic; for what cause, I know not. But this I know, that, between the pope and him, there is implacable hatred. I also know, that one of them must be acting very unjustly by the other. Which of the two, I know not. As far therefore, as I have power so to do, I hereby absolve the injured party. And I excommunicate one of them, namely, the injurer; and pronounce him to be excommunicated forthwith, as harassing all Christendom by his injustice.'

The Spanish monarch Alfonso may be added to the list of sovereigns closely connected with the king of England, by his daughter's marriage with Prince Edward. Louis IX. of France is another; for his queen was sister to Henry's. But Louis was heartily disposed to be friendly to Henry on higher principles. For though grievously misled in some instances, through the erroneous teaching of the Romish priests, the king of France was anxious before all things to obey the laws of God. Instead, therefore, of taking advantage of the disturbances in England, or of Henry's incapacity, to

deprive the latter of his French possessions, Louis did his utmost to maintain peace between the English barons and their king. And when Henry visited Paris, on his way from Guienne, Louis told him that, if the French nobles would allow him to do so, he would gladly restore Normandy, of which he feared king John had been unjustly deprived. It would not only be uncharitable, but unreasonable to think him insincere in speaking thus. For when Henry's contest with the earl of Leicester made it quite evident, that he must have acquiesced in any terms the king of France had chosen to propose, Louis treated him in a very generous manner, withdrawing the French garrisons from some disputed places on the borders of Guienne; and paying him £100,500 sterling *, by way of purchase-money for an honest title to those provinces, which king Henry could have no reasonable hope of recovering. In consequence of this, the royal family of England joined in signing documents, whereby ^{A.D.} 1259. they renounced their claim to Normandy, Anjou, Touraine, Maine, Poitou, and the Agenois; after the manner in which the nearest of kin unite in cutting off the entail of an estate, which they wish to have sold. And when these sovereigns again met, Louis showed an amiable desire to benefit the king of England by the best advice he could give him, particularly in the most important concern of life. Henry's ignorant or perhaps artful chaplains, had taught him to attend mass, that is to be present at the consecration of the bread used in the Lord's Supper, three times a day. And when the Priest held up the bread, after consecration, to be

* The king of France offered for these cessions either to maintain 500 knights for two years, or pay an equivalent; which Henry valued at 134,000 livres tournois, worth 15 shillings each in modern money. Louis acceded to the valuation; but conditioned that the money should either be spent in the service of God or the Church; or for the good of the kingdom of England.

worshipped, as already become, according to their strange doctrine, the very body of Christ which suffered on the cross, the superstitious king of England used to catch hold of the officiating priest's hand, and kiss his fingers. But Louis advised him to hear sermons oftener instead of giving up so much time to attendance at mass. To which Henry replied, "That he had rather see a friend more frequently than hear another speak of him; though the speaker might tell good things of his friend!"

None of the monkish historians of that age have failed to record this answer; which they very much admired. It indeed proved how completely Henry had imbibed the Romish heresy of transubstantiation, believing that when he saw the bread, or *wafer* as it is called, his eyes beheld his Saviour. But even if he had been right in this belief, it was childish to speak of the sight of our Lord's human body as more to be desired than the understanding of His words, and the having them impressed on our hearts. How many saw Christ daily in the flesh, whilst He was on earth, and even beheld His miracles, without being profited thereby; because they did not prefer Mary's better part, of listening to his instruction! If Henry, or the monks who thought highly of his reply, had known the Scriptures, they would have found there, that our Lord provided for the correction of such errors; by saying, "*The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life* *."

The bountiful sower had sown much good seed in Henry's temperament; but the light of the word of God shone not upon it. And his neglect of that appointed source of light made him ignorant, that it needed the watering of the Holy Spirit. Hence every good disposition within him became most pitifully corrupted; and brought forth bitter fruits,

* John vi. 63.

needing repentance. His meek submission to his spiritual guides led but to superstitious folly. He was a faithful husband; but his fondness for his wife led him to injure his own people, that he might enrich her worthless relations. He was an affectionate kinsman; but this led him into the fearful sin of entrusting the Church, for which Christ died, to unholy men; thereby injuring his subjects still more deeply.

Yet so much does peace promote the growth of worldly prosperity, at least, that all king Henry's mismanagement did not prevent both commerce, and the arts, from making greater progress during the first forty years of his reign, than they had done in any equal portion of time since the conquest. This had enabled the nation to bear, without ruin, the continual draught which the popes made upon its resources. It happened to be most convenient for them to draw the greater part of their money through the hands of Italian brokers residing in England, who understood commercial transactions much better than the natives. To increase their profits on the sums transmitted, these brokers would send out no more of the money collected in England, than they might be unable to employ to advantage in purchasing the exportable produce of this country; such as corn, wool, and tin. For they knew that their correspondents abroad, selling these articles at more than was given for them here, might satisfy the pope's claims with but a portion of what his agents had received in England. The ingenuity of the Italians in devising ways of making gain, would thus give encouragement to the tin-miners, and enlarge the farmer's market. But though the charters granted by the king to the Hanseatic merchants of Hamburgh and Lubeck, residing in London; his commercial treaty with the king of Norway; and a licence given to the citizens of New-

castle to dig for coals on Newcastle moor, A.D. 1234. being the first mention made of collieries, prove the increased activity of commerce; yet the people suffered dreadfully at times, from the want of a set of dealers who might employ a large capital in buying corn when cheap, to sell it again after a worse harvest. The trade of a corn-dealer being almost unknown, the produce of an abundant year was sold exceedingly cheap; and consequently much wasted. And if two or three fruitful years occurred in succession, the farmer began to plough less ground; and still nothing was housed against an unproductive season; so when that came, in its turn, bread rose far higher in price than it ever does now, when considered in proportion to other things. Thus in 1258 the price of the quarter of wheat rose to sixteen shillings; the ordinary wages of a journeyman baker being but one half-penny a day *. This was as great a dearth as if wheat should now rise to £38 the quarter. That useful root the potatoe was then unknown; but oats might possibly supply a large portion of the food of the poor. At what price they were sold is not exactly known; but they would fail with the want of rain, which had ruined the wheat crop. Hence the destruction of lives by this famine was such as no irregularity in the seasons ever produces now.

In London alone, 15,000 of the poor are said to have been either starved to death, or carried off by the diseases, which resulted from unwholesome and insufficient food. This would amount to about every third man. But of those whose dead bodies are described as lying, by five or six together, in the mud of the streets, many must have been persons who had wandered in from the country, hoping to obtain some of the corn which was brought over to

* See p. 459. vol. i. where the prices are set down in money of our time. Sixteen shillings contained as much silver then as 2*l.* 8*s.* at present.

London from Germany and Holland by the high prices. Twelve years after, the country was again visited by a dearth of equal severity. A more extended commerce was still needed to give agriculture a steady encouragement, and to equalize the price of food *.

Peace is naturally favourable to the arts; but most of them were as yet in too humble a state to proceed otherwise than slowly. Manufactures of fine linen, however, were established at this time in the counties of Wilts and Sussex; and the skill of the English in embroidering priests' vestments drew forth the praises of the pope. But it was in architecture that the greatest improvement was made. The bishops and abbots possessed immense estates; and the laws forbade their having children, on whom to spend their wealth, and by whom to perpetuate their name; so that, to escape being forgotten, they were desirous of leaving some visible and lasting memorials of their greatness. They also shared with the nobility in that unhappy delusion, which tempted them to hope that they might bribe the justice of the Almighty by erecting monasteries and churches to His honour, or rather to that of His supposed favourite servants. Hence no fewer than 157 abbeys, priories, and other religious houses were founded in this reign; and many of them were built in a style of such beauty, as modern architects are frequently employed to copy.

The earliest English buildings have been mentioned as distinguishable by massive pillars, supporting circular arches. In King Stephen's reign it became a frequent practice to place rows of these

* In the last year of Henry's reign, a duty of one ponny was laid on the ton of wine; which brought into the treasury 15l. 16s. 7d. for London, where 7800 tons arrived in a year. Sandwich imported 1900. The province of Guienne abounded in vineyards; and beer had not yet superseded the use of a small wine, from this part of the king's territories, as the household drink of the Norman families.

arches, as ornaments, along the face of a wall; with the head of a pillar, on which one extremity of a pair of semicircles rested, in the centre of another semicircle. The ruins of Castle Acre Priory in Norfolk, and parts of Durham cathedral afford conspicuous examples of these rows of columns, surmounted by semicircles crossing each other. Architects soon observed that, between these interlacing arches and the two adjacent pillars, they had thus inclosed a figure somewhat resembling a lancet. The shape pleased their fancy, so they next began to construct this new kind of arch, without continuing the semicircles beyond the place where their crossing formed the point of the lancet. To let the pillars, which supported the roof of a church, remain as wide apart as before, and yet produce this lancet form, it became necessary to carry them up much higher. Hence the lancet-arch style is loftier than that which preceded it. The older parts of Westminster Abbey were built, at the expence of Henry III., in this style. In the cathedral of Salisbury it prevails throughout; and the windows of the chapter-house at Lincoln, erected by good Bishop Grostete, catch the passing traveller's eye as indisputable specimens of lancet architecture *.

But the growth of the arts is chiefly interesting as it shows the awakening of those powers with which the Creator has endowed the mind of man; and the accounts of Friar Bacon's wonderful progress in knowledge afford a more decisive example of this awakening, and more encouragement to industry struggling against difficulties, than the description or sight of buildings so sumptuous that

* Other examples of this style, being built about the same period, are the noble west front of Peterborough, and parts of Carlisle, Durham, Ely, Lincoln, Wells, Worcester, and York cathedrals; the conventual churches of Beverley and Ripon; the ruined abbeys of Tintern, Netley, Valle Crucis, Tynemouth, and Brinkbourne; and the parochial churches of Howdon, St. Mary Ottery, and St. George's Stamford.

they cannot be rivalled, but by those who have treasures at their disposal.

Roger Bacon was born at Ilchester, and educated at Oxford, from whence he proceeded to continue his studies in the University of Paris. ^{A.D. 1214.} Abroad he found instructors who, to the knowledge of Latin and Greek, enabled him to add Hebrew and Arabic. This last language gave him access to the learning of the Arabians, which was then much more extensive and exact than that of the nations of Europe *. At the age of twenty-six he returned to Oxford, and, becoming a Franciscan Friar, devoted himself to philosophical pursuits, in which he made such advances, as to arrive at discoveries, that were not equalled by other scientific enquirers for centuries after his death. Thus he is said to have found out a method of arranging glasses of variable thickness so as to produce the effect of a telescope. He also invented gunpowder. But, reflecting that such a powerful and violent instrument was likely to be turned by the wickedness of men into a means of mischief, he left the recipe for its composition with the order of the letters, in some of its words, so changed and confused, that no man should be able to make it from his description; and that yet, if ever its composition should be discovered by another, those letters might then be seen to contain the names of its proper ingredients. But Bacon's attainments were dearly purchased by devoting to researches after perishable things the hours which, on entering a religious order, he had

* In the important sciences connected with numbers it would have been impossible to have attained to the knowledge we now possess, or at any rate to have applied that knowledge in practice, if that very barbarous and inconvenient system of numerals copied from the Romans, had not been exchanged for the Arabian; which is perhaps at once the most ingenious and simple the world has ever seen. The Arabian numerals were first brought into use in England about this time. Who could divide *MCCCXCVI* by *CCCXLIX*?

promised to God ; and the precious talents so abundantly bestowed by his Maker, that He might be honored therewith. The people among whom Friar Bacon was appointed to dwell were perishing from ignorance of the Scriptures. The ability to read and search those Scriptures had been given to him ; and he could not turn his clear and powerful understanding to the study of them without perceiving that God was dishonoured and that his countrymen were miserably led astray by those misrepresentations of the Word of God and of His laws, which the bulk of the people could not distinguish from the truth. But Friar Bacon, while he sharply reprehended the ignorance of the clergy, in matters of science or the languages, for which the popes were not disposed to defend them *, held his peace about the infinitely more important errors of their doctrine ; being either wanting in affection for the honour of God, or selfishly preferring the gratification of his intellectual tastes to the saving of the souls of others at the imminent risk of his own personal safety. Yet all his caution did not prevent his suffering persecution. The surprising effects which his science enabled him to exhibit, before men incapable of comprehending the means employed, made Friar Bacon to be thought a magician ; and he underwent a long imprisonment, under the charge of having made a compact, to engage the devil to do for him things beyond the reach of human art.

But if the prudence of this wise man made him shrink from exploring and combating the most pernicious errors of his age, the folly of the simple and the knavery of the cunning have been seen, throughout this reign, doing unintentionally the work of

* An Archbishop of Canterbury, visiting Oxford in 1376, issued an official order against the use of certain Latin barbarisms, then to be heard in that university, and defended by some of its members. Amongst them he specifies the following, *Ego currit—tu currit—currens est ego*.

God; gradually loosening that strong hold, which popery had once possessed over the minds of the people; and making other valuable preparations for the day when it should please the true Head of the Church to raise up bold and faithful servants, both able and willing to unveil *the mystery of iniquity*.

CHAPTER II.

Edward I.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>Popes.</i>	
	A.D.		A.D.
Rodolph.		Gregory X.	
Adolphus	1291	John XXI.	1276
Albert	1298	Nicholas III.	1277
		Martin IV.	1280
		Honorius IV.	1285
<i>Kings of France.</i>		Nicholas IV.	1287
Philip III.		Celestin V.	1292
Philip IV.	1285	Boniface VIII.	1294
		Benedict XI.	1303
<i>Kings of Scotland.</i>		Clement V.	1304
Alexander III.			
Margaretfrom 1286 to	1290	<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
Balliolfrom 1292 to	1296	Michael Palæologus.	
Robert I.	1306	Andronicus	1282

THE last chapter gave frequent occasion for observing how favourable it was to the establishment of English liberty, that the grant of Magna Charta by John, should be followed by such a reign as that of his son Henry. But the succession of a second king, of the same weak character, would either have led to the entire destruction of the royal authority, or would have tempted and enabled some ambitious noble to get possession of it. In the one case, the uncontrolled *passions of men* would have filled the

country with wickedness and misery; in the other, the covenant so lately made between the king and the nation would have been at an end.

Edward I. was too resolute a man, and too full of bravery and of worldly wisdom, to let the reins of government be improperly slackened, whilst in his hands. But the lately granted privileges of the people might have been crushed under so able and ambitious a monarch, had it not pleased the Almighty to display his bounty most conspicuously at this critical period, in making the weaknesses and besetting sins of the English sovereigns to conspire with their more estimable endowments, in strengthening and advancing the growth of rational freedom. It became the ruling desire of the new king to extend his dominions by conquest. This made him more desirous than his father had been to gain the good-will of his people; because he could not hope to force the English to serve his ambition against their will, without wasting the time and resources to compel them, which he was anxious to employ in subduing the neighbouring nations. His wish to stand well in the opinion of his subjects did not, indeed, always prevent him from employing illegal and unjustifiable means to collect treasure; but it made him glad to devise and enact acceptable laws, respecting all questions between subject and subject. And though very reluctant to surrender any portion of kingly power, his prudence made him prefer submitting even to this, rather than have his resources still more weakened by the ruinous effects of a civil war.

As Edward was in Sicily when his father died, the English nobility assembled at the Temple Church in London; and took upon them to declare the Archbishop of York, the Earl of Cornwall, who was the nearest prince of the blood royal, and the Earl of Gloucester, joint guardians of the realm. *They governed the kingdom in peace for nearly two*

years, whilst the king, advancing slowly homeward, did homage to Philip III. for his French possessions; set them in order; and arranged the terms of a commercial treaty with the Countess of Flanders. This lady had seized so much English wool, sent abroad to be manufactured by her subjects, the Dutch and Flemings, that £8000 is spoken of as only sufficient to pay part of the loss sustained by our countrymen.

When Edward reached England he was August, in his thirty-sixth year; strong and active 1274. in his person; and but too abundantly endowed, for his own welfare, with all those qualities which tempt the great to depart from righteousness.

Alexander III. king of Scotland, and Llewellyn sovereign of North Wales, had been summoned as vassals of the English crown, to take the oath of fealty at his coronation. The Scotch monarch came; and received from Edward's exchequer £5 a day for his expences. But Llewellyn refused to appear at the English court; unless the king's eldest son, the Lord High Chancellor, and the Earl of Gloucester, lately Regent, were put into his hands, as hostages for his safety. By naming such conditions he must have intended to insult the king; and by repeating his refusal, the imprudent Welchman gave Edward a decent excuse for proceeding against him as a rebellious vassal.

The work of strife and ambition soon began. But whilst they seemed to occupy every breast, it is cheering to trace the hand of God preparing the way for happier things. When they who sincerely sought to know Him must have been tempted to cry out, in despair, *Who will shew us any good?* He was pleased to put it into the heart of a friar, named John of Darlington, to publish, for the use of our countrymen, the first Concordances ever seen in England. As the Scriptures had not yet A.D. 1276. been translated into English, this Concordance

was necessarily composed in Latin ; being meant for a guide to texts in the Latin Bible. It could, therefore, only be used by scholars. But it was an invaluable provision for the use of those men whom God was now about to raise up, and lead to the discovery of the truth. Instead of suffering themselves to be bewildered by the decisions of blind guides, they, who sincerely honoured His holy word, could henceforward turn to the Scriptures, and by the help of the Concordance, could easily collect, under one view, what the Holy Spirit had caused to be written for their instruction, concerning each separate subject of inquiry.

The power of England, when ably conducted, was necessarily an overmatch for that of the Welsh. And the invaders found them a divided people ; a disadvantage, for which the natural strength of their mountainous country was insufficient to compensate. The politic ambition of Edward would have disposed him to be content with reducing the Welsh prince to an acknowledgment of his dependancy, which though more real, in consequence of his comparative weakness, would not have been more humbling in its forms, than that in which the king confessed himself subject, as possessor of Guienne, to the sovereign of France. But after having

A.D. 1277. been defeated by Edward's arms ; and allowed to retain part of his native dominions, on terms which would have placed him at the head of the English nobility ; and after having accepted, as a boon, the remission of a fine of £50,000, imposed for his slighting the acknowledged duties of vassalage, Llewellyn and his brother David made an unexpected attack on the English, and irritated
A.D. 1282. their powerful enemies by behaving with unusual cruelty to the unarmed peasants and women.

The king of England, on the other hand, had been making himself strong at home by his sagacious

attention to the interests of his subjects ; confirming the Great Charter ; summoning representatives of the clergy and the commons to parliament ; and enacting several just and useful laws. The principle which suggested one of these laws, deserves to be particularly remembered to the legislator's honor. It states, that whereas the oath ordinarily required to be taken, by the claimant in certain proceedings, most frequently tempted him to perjury, future claimants should not be put upon their oaths ; but should be dealt with as in duty bound so to speak and conduct themselves, as the oath would have obliged them. Another very important law, called the statute of mortmain, that is of the *dead hand*, proved the king's freedom from much of the superstition of his time : and could never have been carried, but that all ranks of his subjects were already convinced, that he was determined to govern with firmness.

When land was given to the Church, in those ages, it was supposed to be held by the clergy, in order to pay the expence of buying prayers, that should make the soul of the wicked rich man find an easier way to heaven than that of the poor sinner. According to this vain belief the dead had still, and would always have, the benefit of the rents of the land so employed ; and therefore the clergy said, they ought not to be called upon to perform any services to the living for those rents. The kings of England, however, did not permit them to hold these estates with such an entire exemption as the church demanded, from the ordinary duties required of landholders * ; but still they managed to be excused from several of those duties. Hence artful men were tempted to make over their estates to monasteries ; on condition of being made tenants to the church for the same lands, at a nominal rent,

* See vol. I. p. 364 and 383.

lower than the value of those services which the must otherwise have performed for their superior lord. The estates thus fraudulently transferred, and those almost daily given or bequeathed by conscience-stricken great men, made continual additions to a property which the church was considered as unable to sell, or give away again. Thus the whole country was rapidly passing into, what was fitly called, the dead man's hand ; till Edward made

his prelates consent to pass the statute *A.D.*
1279. *mortmain*. By this celebrated law, any mort-
gifts or transfers of land to the church were
declared illegal ; and, if the clergy took possession
upon any future grants, the property was to be for-
feited to the superior lord, or to the king.

A sovereign who could thus bridle the encroach-
ments of the Romish church, found it easy to con-
vince his subjects that the money he asked for, to
carry on the war against Llewellyn, would not be
wasted with the improvidence which had provoked
them to refuse his father's demands. The prospect
of entirely subduing Wales was popular with the En-
glish ; who had long felt the annoyance occasioned
by having a national enemy so close at hand. They

consequently freely contributed their money
May,
1282. and joined Edward's standard at Worcester
in numbers fully sufficient for his purpose.
Before the end of the year Llewellyn had perished
in battle ; and his brother David, after being some
months a houseless wanderer among the mountains,
was betrayed to the English by his own countrymen
to put an end to the war.

It had, at one time, suited Edward's policy to
attach this Welch prince to himself ; whilst he was
at variance with his brother Llewellyn. For the
favours bestowed with this interested view, the
king had unreasonably expected him to be lasting-
grateful. It was said too, that David had not only
fought on Llewellyn's side, but that his persuasions

had tempted his elder brother to make his last struggle for independence. Hence the king was filled with rage at the unhappy young man; and when David was brought to Rhydlan Castle, in chains, he refused to let him be conducted into his presence to sue for mercy.

The earls, barons, and knights were now assembled in parliament at Shrewsbury; whilst the representatives of the inferior clergy and of the cities and boroughs sat at Acton Burnell, some miles off. To the former place David was carried, to be tried by the English nobility for treason; and they gratified their sovereign's evil passions, by condemning the prince to die. But the Romish clergy having now fixed upon burning to death, as the regular punishment for denial of the pope's authority, men began to think, that not to avenge offences against the king with, at least, equal cruelty, would be undervaluing his honor and welfare. The ministers of Edward, therefore, thought it politic to devise such a dreadful sentence against their helpless victim, as lamentably displayed the truth of that Scripture which saith, the *wisdom that descendeth not from above is devilish* *. Horrible as this sentence was, too horrible to be presented to the mind without the danger of fostering malignant thoughts, an evil custom is so easily established, and so slowly removed, that, though the light of the Gospel has long dispelled the darkness under which this vindictive sentence for treason was framed, and though the pure teaching of the religion of peace and gentleness, has made it impossible that the government could permit such cruelty now, the judges of the land continued to be required by the law, to pronounce, over every condemned traitor, words which never ought to have passed their reverend lips; till a statesman, now living, appealed

* *Jam. iii. 15.*

to parliament, and removed for ever this relic of the barbarity encouraged by the Romish church.

Sept. 1283. Thus miserably perished the last of the native British princes; condemned to such sufferings for violence, and murder, and infringement of the rights of a king, by the same warriors who had violently, and with many a murder, deprived him of his rights, as the sovereign of his own people. *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy**, says the word of that Almighty Lord, to whom both David and Edward were alike subject; and before whom both had offended against this His just decree.

To the Welsh and English nations the events which the folly of one, and the sins of both their rulers had brought about, were full of mercy. For a little while, indeed, each suffered the mischiefs of war. But Wales being, henceforward, permanently united to England, the neighbouring counties were relieved from the insecurity and the temptations to violence which, in those times particularly, made borderers at once an unhappy and a wicked people. The Welsh, especially, were gainers, by losing the independence which flattered their pride. In so narrow a territory, the frequent quarrels of the ruling family had disturbed the peace of every hamlet. Their morals were corrupted, by hearing their bards sing the praises of such robbers as most daringly violated the commands of God, if their crimes were but committed on the English side of a brook†. Laws they had; but some of them were such as must not defile the historian's pen. Others did but display the troublesome little mindedness of those who legislated for the ancient Britons; fixing the exact price at which different articles must be

* Jam. ii. 13.

† There is a popular tale about Edward's slaughtering the Welsh bards, lest they should tempt their countrymen to farther resistance. It is but an idle story.

sold ; as if the farmer could with justice be required to part with a bushel of corn for the same sum when he had a scanty as when he had an abundant crop*.

As King Edward was too wise not to desire to conciliate his new subjects, and improve their worldly condition, he took care to have an account of their laws and national customs drawn up for his information ; and retaining what was good, he improved and remoulded the rest after the manner in use amongst the English. He also divided their country into shires ; and built and fortified such sumptuous castles, as the Welsh, whose princes had lived but in wooden houses†, could not look at without being conscious of their new masters' superior power. In one of these, Caernarvon Castle, his queen Eleanor was brought to bed of a son, called from hence Edward of Caernarvon ; to whom the King 1284. gave the title of Prince of Wales. This soothed the mortified vanity of the Welsh, by showing the high value which he put upon his conquest ; and also by making the name of their country to be pronounced with respect. At the time of this boy's birth, an elder son, Alfonso, was living. But his early death made the young Prince of Wales heir to the English crown ; and it has ever since been the title borne by the king of England's eldest son during his father's life.

After the subjugation of the Welsh, king Edward visited his French possessions, and was gratified by being solicited to mediate between the French monarch and some other sovereigns ; but this

* This interference of the law between buyers and sellers actually extended down to the prices of cats, which were fixed, in the Welsh statute book, at various rates, according to the age and other qualities.

† By an old Welsh law still extant, whoever burnt or destroyed the king's palace, was to forfeit one pound and eighty pence to rebuild it ; and 120 pence more to restore each of the offices, viz. a sleeping-room, kitchen, chapel, granary, bake-house, store-house, stable, and dog-kennel.

honourable employment detaining him abroad near four years, he was obliged to desire his English Feb. 1268. ministers to call a parliament in his absence, and ask his subjects for aid to support his expenses. This parliament met accordingly in London. But the nation being dissatisfied with his continuing so long out of England, the earl of Gloucester answered for the rest, that they would give nothing till they should see the king's face again.

This reply brought Edward home. And to recover the esteem of his people by a conspicuous display of his attention to their interests, he set on foot an inquiry into the conduct of the judges. The result proved that such an enquiry ought to have been made earlier. Only two were found innocent. Weyland, chief justice of the Common Pleas, was declared guilty of having first urged his servants to commit murder, and then screened them from punishment. For this his property was forfeited to the crown; but, strange to say, he was permitted to quit the kingdom in safety. Stratton, chief baron of the Exchequer, was condemned to pay the king 34,000 marks. And, by the sentences passed upon the rest, Edward levied altogether nearly as much more. There must have been dreadful extortion and greediness after bribes, if the judges, whose lawful sources of income were but small, could pay fines amounting to more than the annual revenue raised by the government.

It was, however, a very ill advised system of government which allowed the king of the country to look to the fines, levied for offences against law or justice, as his most fertile source of income. This tempted Edward to set on foot a legal inquiry, as to the proof all landed proprietors could give, of their having a right to the estates of which they were in possession. Not that he wished to restore them to the more lawful owners, if it should appear that the

present possessors were not justified in retaining them; but that the latter might be induced to pay him considerable fines, to have their titles confirmed against all claimants. As very few persons could produce deeds of grant, or purchase, so carefully drawn up that the king's lawyers should be unable to detect any flaw in them, the attempt to proceed in this inquiry excited great murmurs among the nobility. When the earl of Warenne was asked to produce his documents for examination, he took down a rusty sword, and said, 'With this my estates were won, and shall be kept.' Pride put this answer into his mouth; but it was, in reality, a disgraceful confession, that his ancestors had been robbers on a large scale; and that he cared as little about justice as they. The boldness of his language however, and the certainty that many would join him in arms, if he chose to demand that this unpopular enquiry should proceed no farther, led the king to stop it, as if of his own accord.

The king being thus obliged to leave the property of the nobility on its old footing, they could not but consent that the old conditions, by which persons held lands under them, should also be considered as become, by time, established rights. And yet they thereby lost, in reality, the greater part of their estates; though they perceived it not till many years after.

When nearly every person, who had money, had land also in his own occupation, there was scarcely any one to buy agricultural produce. The farmer fed his own family; but, rarely finding purchasers for what more was raised, he could pay no regular rent in money. Hence those nobles, who obtained from the Conqueror grants of whole districts, found it convenient to have several places of residence, on different parts of their property; and were accustomed to move with their large retinues from one to another, *consuming at each* so much of the produce

of the neighbouring lands as was not eaten up by the cultivators. These latter were called *villains*; and were still so far slaves, that they received no money wages for their toil, and could not refuse to labour for their lord. But, instead of money, he let them have land to cultivate for their own use; so that the labour they performed for him was, in fact, the rent of their land. And they differed very widely from the negro slave in another respect; that in transactions with every body but their own landlord the law regarded them, by this time, as free men. Again the great proprietor would rather allot portions of his land to many families, and exact from each so many days labour in the month, or year, leaving them time enough to get their own maintenance out of their own portion, than detain them all the year in his own employ. For in this last case he must have housed, and clothed them, at an expence in money, which he could less spare than ground. On the other hand, where the lord had no place of abode near enough to have the produce of an estate conveyed to him, by roads never repaired, he would let others cultivate it on different conditions; such as that the tenant should accompany him, when he was summoned to attend the king with a certain number of followers. Having no hope of obtaining a valuable fixed rent, he chose rather to demand some mere acknowledgment of his right, as an annual pepper-corn; and to catch a large share of the profits of the occupier, when the course of years should have allowed him to lay by something worth taking. It also gratified the pride of the nobles to imitate the king, in their arrangement with those who held lands under them. Hence they regularly demanded an aid from their tenants, when their eldest son might become a knight; fines for offences, or for obtaining justice from other tenants; and a fine for permitting the land to pass to another occupier, whether by death or otherwise.

Whatever the conditions might be, they were written on rolls of parchment, and were exhibited to the lord's steward when he held a court on the manor, to be compared with his copy of the same. If the lord sold any of his property, he let it go free from any conditions of service; and it became *freehold* property. But if the tenant parted with what he held under his lord, the new comer took it on the same conditions as were specified in the steward's copy of the original letting; and hence it was called *copy-hold* property.

But where duties were required, there was generally a sum of money mentioned; which the copyholder might pay instead of the duty. And, this sum being fixed in an age when money was very scarce, perhaps one shilling and six-pence might be specified as the alternative, instead of supplying the lord with a quarter of corn. Hence when money became cheaper, and a quarter of corn would fetch sixty shillings, the nobleman having lost the power of raising the duty, or fine, to the value of the same quantity of corn, found he had, in fact, lost the power of collecting any real rent from his copyhold tenants; and that the farms his ancestors had reserved, to feed their own households, were become the only part of his property which he could dispose of as he chose, and let at rents suitable to the varying price of their produce. Over the larger part of the estates once belonging to his family, the representative of an ancient noble is hence, now, no more than *lord of the manor*; he is proprietor of those lands, only, which happened to be adjacent to some of the residences of his ancestors.

No such consequence as this was intended by the persons who, to guard against oppressive demands on the part of the king, laid down the rule, that the customary tenure of lands, as then existing, should henceforward be regarded as establishing unalterable rights. The nobility were so far from perceiv-

ing the loss which would result to their descendants from this, that they got the king to join them in passing a law, to prevent their tenants from resigning their own rights in the same imprudent way ; as too great a privilege to be allowed them. For such copy-holders as preferred seeking fame and fortune in camps, had of late in many cases granted off the soil, of which they had got possession, to new occupiers for services to be done, or fines to be paid to themselves ; they professing to remain answerable to the original lord. Thus manors were made within manors ; till the law alluded to put a stop to this trifling inconvenience * ; but left the barons exposed to the effects of permanently fixing the copyhold tenures. In this way, without any violent revolution to effect it, a system was unconsciously established, which gradually stripped the great nobles of England of that overwhelming superiority of landed possessions, which, as agriculture improved, would otherwise have made them unmanageable subjects to the king ; and too widely separated from the great body of the gentry, for the independance of the latter, and the welfare of either.

The king's prudence made him give up his intention of filling his treasury by fines, to be levied at the evident risk of a general rebellion. But no scruples of conscience prevented his putting the same device into execution, to a far more iniquitous extent, against a despised and friendless class of subjects, who had wealth enough to tempt him to such injustice. Three hundred Jews were hung in London for the crime of clipping the coin of the realm into portions less than they passed them for†.

* Hence any manor made such since 1290, is not good in law.

† Instead of coining the smaller denominations of money, it had been usual to cut the larger into halves and quarters. This gave room for much dishonesty in the clippers ; who could pass off a slice no larger than a fifth, as though it were the quarter of a shilling.

And Edward made their guilt an excuse for seizing the whole of the property of every individual of that unhappy nation; only giving them back enough to pay for their conveyance out of England. Fifteen thousand Jews were thus turned out of their homes; reduced at once to extreme want; and sent abroad to starve amongst strangers, in whose sight they were hateful.

When the judges thus *loved gifts, and followed after rewards*; and the *prince* of the land put himself on a level with the *companions of thieves**, by robbing a friendless race, we cannot wonder that the sternest laws were needful, to check the multitudes, who would long to imitate the example of their superiors. The acts passed at this period seem drawn up for the government of a nation of robbers. They appear to take for granted, that each poor man said to his neighbour, *Come with us, let us lay wait for blood; let us lurk privily for the innocent. We shall find all precious substance; we shall fill our houses with spoil*†. King Edward's laws order every man, possessed of property, to have arms for its defence; not against foreign invaders, but to combat thieves. Every town, whose lord or inhabitants could afford to build a wall around it, was to have its gates shut from sun-setting to sun-rising. And each gate was to have its guard; who were to arrest the benighted stranger, if he should approach it. And no man might permit any to lodge in his house, for whose good behaviour he would not, likewise, be answerable. And because every hiding-place might be occupied by a robber, it was farther thought necessary to enact, that all banks, trees, hedges, and bushes should be cleared away for the breadth of 400 feet, along the main road leading from one market-town to another; that he who should follow the track in the middle might

* Is. i. 23.

† Prov. i. 12, 13.

be out of the reach of most instruments of offence, from either side.

The miserable state of society which made such regulations needful, showed how little good the nation gained by the existence of that mistaken Church, which had swallowed up so large a portion of the wealth of the country; and whose revenues, and multitudes of monks and priests, might have afforded a religious teacher for every family. But their teaching did not lead men to learn, and inwardly digest, the word of God; and therefore it could take no useful hold of the hearts of men. *If they had caused my people to hear my words, saith God, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings* *.

Yet even the crimes of that age have been made to contribute to our peace and security. It was a provision of Edward I., which still remains in force, that if any person were found suddenly or unaccountably dead, diligent enquiry should be made, by the coroner, as to the cause of his death. And a commission which the same king issued, ordering that certain knights in each county should aid his judges, in the prevention and punishment of offences, was the first step towards the appointment of Justices of the Peace.

The career of Edward, however, as might be expected from the past, was unblest to himself. It exposed him to continued temptations; and each was suffered to drag him deeper into guilt.

Alexander, king of Scotland, died without leaving any descendants, except a young grand-child; Margaret, daughter to Eric, king of Norway, by a Scotch princess. Her title to succeed Alexander on the throne of Scotland, was not disputed. But, as she was great niece to the powerful and ambitious king of England, Eric and the Scotch nobility united in

* Jer. xxiii. 22.

requesting his protection for the infant queen. This Edward promised to give; only conditioning, that the Maid of Norway, as she was called, should, in due time, be given in marriage to his eldest son.

Thus had he provided for uniting all the island of Great Britain under the dominion of one sovereign. But wiser and irresistible counsels had determined to punish Edward's ambition with disappointment; and, at the same time, to provide far better for the happiness of future generations. Had England, Wales, and Scotland been all united under the warlike descendants of Edward, in the next century, France would have become also theirs; and English liberty would have perished. The death of Queen Margaret in her infancy defeated Edward's plan. And his subsequent attempts Oct.
1290. to gain the same end by open wickedness, drove the Scotch to seek a close alliance with France; which preserved the independence of all the three nations. That such was the merciful purpose of the Almighty in preventing a peaceable union of England and Scotland at this period, is made almost indisputable, by the fact that, after long national enmity, they did peaceably become subject to one sovereign, in the reign of the first king of France who was really master of his whole kingdom, and consequently too powerful for English ambition to aim at subduing.

When the news of Margaret's death reached Scotland, no less than thirteen candidates put forward their various claims to the succession; and the fear of having their country torn to pieces by wars amongst the claimants, induced the Scotch nobility to ask king Edward to judge between them; as a powerful neighbour, who could make his decision to be respected. To this he replied, that the right of deciding belonged to him, independent of their request; as lord paramount over the kingdom of Scotland. Now it was true, that some of his prede-

cessors had compelled the Scotch kings to acknowledge themselves vassals of the English sovereigns*. But the acknowledgment of vassalage which had been made a condition in certain treaties for peace, had been expressly given up in another treaty by Richard I.; for a sum of money which he received. Since that, the kings of Scotland had only done homage for the earldom of Huntingdon, or other estates held in England; just as Edward did homage to the king of France for Guienne, without at all compromising, thereby, the independence of the English crown.

When, however, the king repaired to the frontiers of Scotland, to hear evidence as to the claims of the different competitors, the Scotch barons and prelates made no opposition to his assertion of a feudal superiority over their country; and the candidates present expressly assented to it. In this public act of submission, Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, led the way; being desirous to win the favour of his judge by all means. Of the thirteen claimants, John Baliol, Lord of Galloway, and he, were the only persons who stood forward on grounds sufficiently strong to admit of a reasonable debate as to their right. They were both descended from the last king of Scotland who left any posterity; Baliol by an elder daughter, Bruce by a younger. According to the rules by which private inheritances descend, the right to the crown was Baliol's. But Bruce, being a grandson, was one generation nearer to their common ancestor than Baliol, who was the great-grandson; so that he had the like pretension to being preferred before Baliol, to that which king John set up as an excuse for seating himself, rather than Arthur, on the English throne†. To have the matter duly weighed, king Edward desired the two rivals to name commissioners, who should unite

* See Vol. I. p. 281, and 419.

† See Vol. I. p. 433.

with persons appointed by himself, in examining records, and preparing a statement of the question, to be debated before a parliament of both nations. But, in the mean while, he made his office of umpire a pretext for calling upon the governors of the royal castles in Scotland to surrender them to him; that he might put the person, who should be declared lawful heir of the crown, in peaceable possession of them. The power he thus acquired, enabled the king farther to insist, that all holders of royal domains in Scotland should swear fealty to him as their superior lord *.

After eighteen months, judgment was solemnly given by Edward, as advised by the commissioners and parliament, that the kingdom ought to descend like any other property incapable of being shared; and that John Baliol, Lord of Galloway, was therefore entitled to the crown of Scotland. The decision was a just one. But Baliol evidently could not claim to be admitted to reign, upon this decision, without acknowledging the right of Edward to pronounce judgment; and the latter had artfully rested that right on his own claim to authority over Scotland. Besides, the king having got possession of

* Whilst the king was employed in these schemes, his domestic happiness was broken by the death of his affectionate wife, Eleanor of Castile. She died in Lincolnshire; and where her corpse rested, on the way to Westminster, Edward erected magnificent crosses. One remains near Northampton, another at Waltham; and the castles and lions, which belonged to the arms of her father's Spanish kingdoms, Castile and Leon, may still be seen upon them. They were built to invite passers by to pray for her soul; "that if," said the king, in a public letter to his prelates, "any spot of sin remained uncleansed *from forgetfulness*, or aught else, it may, through the divine mercy, be wiped away by the useful assistance of prayers!" Speaking thus of *forgetfulness*, he evidently thought she was to cleanse away her own sin; not knowing the Scripture which saith, (1 John i. 7.) *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*; and that (Acts xiii. 39.) *By Him all that believe are justified from all things*. There can be no *forgetfulness* on His part; and to speak of the assistance of others, in cleansing away the stain of sin, is an insult to His all-sufficiency.

all the strong places, would certainly not surrender them to a person who disputed his superiority. Baliol therefore saw, that he must either forego the prize, most tempting to human ambition; or must accept the crown of Scotland as confessedly Edward's vassal. He preferred the latter; and orders were sent by the king of England for putting the new monarch in possession of the royal castles and estates throughout Scotland.

On the 26th of December, 1292, Baliol did homage to Edward, at Newcastle, for the kingdom of Scotland; and took an oath to serve him, or his heirs, with faith and loyalty, against all men whatsoever.

King Edward was determined that this decided confession of vassalage should not pass away as a mere unmeaning form. Having resolved to be the real sovereign of the whole island of Great Britain, he thought it necessary to accustom the Scotch king to receive and obey his summons with as ready and punctual submission as he could exact from his English vassals. The imprudence of Baliol, in reversing a judgment favourable to the earl of Fife, which had passed before his accession, and received Edward's approbation, occasioned an appeal to the latter; of which he quickly took advantage. The Scotch king was twice cited to make his appearance in an English court, and answer the complaints of the appellant. At first he disregarded the citation; which occasioned another charge against him, for contempt of king Edward's authority. He then appeared in person, and denied the right of the court to interfere between himself and his subjects; but was sentenced to give up three castles for his contumacy. Five times in one year did king Edward send these humiliating citations to the vassal sovereign of Scotland.

It is remarkable, that in the following year, Edward was himself summoned, in a similar manner, to appear as Duke of Guienne before the king of

France, and answer for the misconduct of his Gascon subjects. King Philip's ground of complaint was no light matter. A quarrel between a French and English sailor had been warmly taken up by the crews of their respective vessels, and the evil heart of man making all malignant passions to be highly infectious, the angry feelings spread wider and wider. At length a challenge was given and accepted, between the mariners of the two nations; a vessel was moored in the Channel, as a mark for the place of meeting; and a pitched battle was fought around it, by shipping of every description. The English engaged were chiefly sailors sent out by the cinque ports; but they had with them several Irish and Gascon vessels, acting as their allies. The ferocious customs of maritime war, in those ages, permitted men to glut their revenge to the utmost, and refuse quarter to a yielding foe. The French lost the day; and 15,000 of their seamen are said to have been slain, or thrown overboard to perish in the waves. Two hundred and forty of their vessels were brought, as prizes, into the harbours of England.

When the laws confessed that no Englishman could hope to live secure at home, without being always prepared for combat; and when such a murderous engagement could take place at sea, between the king's subjects and those of a friendly power, without any permission from their government, it is plain that, in mere worldly policy, and justice to those over whom he reigned, Edward should rather have exerted all his power to bring his own people into due obedience to wholesome rule, than have sought to extend his dominions.

The great injury suffered by the French, roused king Philip to demand reparation; and the part taken by the Gascons, inhabitants of France, gave him a pretext for citing Edward, as their lord, to answer for the mischief they had done to the other subjects of himself, their common sovereign.

The king of England declined appearing before Philip in person; but sent his brother Edmund to propose terms of accommodation. Unfair advantage was taken of his concessions. His French territories were declared to be forfeited, in consequence of his refusing to appear personally. And Philip got possession of Gascony, by a treacherous use of the orders for submission which Edward had sent out, to the governors of his castles, under the expectation of being very differently treated. On hearing of this, and being refused redress, English messengers were sent to Paris, to declare, in the name of their sovereign, that whereas, according to the custom of his predecessors, he had done homage to the king of France for Guienne, he had lately been unjustly treated, and not as a liege man ought to be; and would therefore be his vassal no longer.

July, 1294. After this the king called together his parliament, which Baliol was obliged to attend; and an apparently unanimous resolution was there expressed, to assist him in recovering his French possessions. But the manner in which Edward had declared himself free from any obligation to continue his observance of the unforced homage which he had solemnly paid to the king of France, could not be defended by any arguments which would not equally justify Baliol, who heard them, in imitating his example. The Scotch could not bear to have the independence of their nation so conspicuously set aside, as it had been of late. They were resolved on throwing off the English yoke, whether their king would head them in the endeavour or not; and Philip and Baliol were led by their common interest to unite in a treaty, binding each other to have the same friends and foes. After this, the king of Scotland, being again summoned to attend his sovereign, sent Edward a message like his own *to Philip*.

The known hostility of the Scotch nobles had brought king Edward into the North with 40,000 men, before he received Baliol's renouncement of his homage. The war immediately began. Towns were taken and plundered; and their inhabitants, in some instances, put to the sword. Dunbar field was stained with the blood of 12,000 Scots, slain in battle, or in the flight. After the defeat suffered there, Edinburgh, Sterling, Perth, and St. Andrew's, opened their gates to Edward's forces; and Baliol, hopeless of success, resolved to humble himself, before his too powerful foe. Mounted on a galloway, with a white wand in his hand, as the sign of vassalage, the Scottish monarch waited on king Edward in a church-yard; and spoke of his own resistance as rebellion. Such his conqueror was determined to consider it; because this gave him a plea for seizing on Scotland, as the forfeited estate of a rebellious vassal. But he regarded Baliol himself as a man of too weak and spiritless a character ever to become formidable; and therefore permitted him to live peaceably, and with honourable attendance, in the Tower; having liberty to quit it at such times as he chose, to visit any place not more than twenty miles from London.

March,
1296.

April 27.

June 24.

And now the Scotch baronage, the prelates, and the boroughs by their representatives, all submitted, did homage to the king of England at Berwick, and swore fidelity to him. An English nobleman was appointed warden of Scotland, and the king seemed to have completed and secured his conquest. But a private gentleman, who had no resources except in his own bravery, and his power of persuading others to follow his leading, was raised up to light the flames of war anew. The name of this hero was William Wallace. The title of hero, however, has almost universally been given to men whom the word of God would call upon us to pity.

1297.

instead of admiring: and such was Wallace. He conducted his warfare like one not content with driving out the oppressors of his country, but bent on taking revenge for injuries. Yet the Christian law makes no exceptions, when it says, *Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord**. In the hands of Him who hath thus said, Wallace was the rod wherewith He chastised the English for their oppressions; and farther afflicted the Scotch, for their indifference to the oaths which they had taken in His name.

At first, Wallace was but a leader of outlaws; putting the English to death whenever he could come upon them unarmed, or but few together. Success, and the increased number of his followers, brought several of the gentry to join him; whilst the higher nobility supported him only during the short period of his greatest prosperity. Before six months had passed, from his first coming forward,

Sept. 10. Wallace had given the warden of Scotland a decisive overthrow; had driven him back to England; and had ravaged its northern counties. In less than another ten months, Edward had again marched an overwhelming force into the north; consisting chiefly of Irish and Welsh, drawn from their homes to shed their own blood, or that of men who had never injured them, that their conqueror might

July 22, subdue one nation more; and above 20,000
1298. Scotch had been slain by their hands in

a great fight near Falkirk. Wallace was henceforward obliged to lurk in the Highlands. But the king found it more easy to make a desert of Scotland, than to hold it in subjection; for an army could not remain to enforce obedience in districts so poor, that although the soldiers seized on all they could find, there was not provision enough brought

* Rom. xii. 19.

in to keep the troops from starving. In the northern and western parts of Scotland, therefore, no other king was acknowledged but Baliol. They, however, who used his name, thought it politic to apply to Pope Boniface for protection: and, to make Boniface feel interested in their cause, they professed to regard Scotland as being anciently a part of the property of the see of Rome; and subject to the Popes in worldly, as well as spiritual matters. Boniface was not less ambitious than the worst of his predecessors; and, like a man perfectly indifferent to the truth, he straightway wrote June,
1299. a letter to king Edward, telling him, that he must know, how the kingdom of Scotland had belonged of old, and did still belong in full right, to the popes, as its lords paramount; and that therefore, if he had any demands upon its king or people, he must prosecute his claim in the papal courts within a set time. This letter Boniface ordered Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, to deliver in person to the king; an order obeyed so slowly, that it was a twelvemonth before Edward, who was within the Scottish borders, received it.

Now it so happened that the Pope, professing great anxiety for the peace of Europe, had succeeded, a little before this, in persuading the kings of France and England to refer their disputes to him, and to put Guienne into his hands; to be restored to the one or the other, as should seem just to him, after weighing the arguments of each. He knew, therefore, that king Edward would not venture to send an offensive answer to his strange claim for interfering in the affairs of Scotland. But the king summoned a parliament to meet at Lincoln, and advise him concerning the Pope's claims. And, whilst he drew up his own reply in cautious and most respectful terms, he took care that it should be accompanied by another, drawn up Feb.
1301. in the name of his nobility. In this latter

answer, Boniface was told, by one hundred and four barons and earls, who affixed their seals to it, that even if their king should be willing, they would never suffer his sovereign rights, in any temporal questions, to be decided, nor yet debated, before the pope or his officers; as any such deference to the papal authority could not but be to the prejudice of those liberties, which they had inherited from their forefathers. But, in the meanwhile, the haughty temper of the Roman Pontiff* had involved him in a very angry quarrel with king Philip, by which Edward was a gainer in his turn. For Philip and the Pope were ready to bid against each other, to procure his support. Hence Guienne was given up to him without farther dispute, and the Scotch were left at his mercy by their pretended friends. Once

Feb. more, therefore, he marched his armies over
1304. Scotland; and Comyn, the regent set up by Baliol's adherents, agreed to terms of submission in their name. Wallace was soon after taken prisoner, being treacherously surprised, and delivered up to the king by Monteith, governor of Dumbarton Castle. His end was most disgraceful to Edward, who had him arraigned in Westminster Hall, before an English jury, for treason, murder, and robbery; and suffered his officers to mock the unhappiness of their victim, by placing him at the bar with a crown of laurel on his head, in derision of his former victories. It ill became the king thus to persecute a brother sinner, he himself being a robber, whose spoil was kingdoms; and guilty, in the sight of God, of the murder of so many thousands, slain that he might get possession of what was not his own. Wallace in vain protested, that he could not be guilty of treason to a king, whose subject he had never consented to become. His

* A name taken up by the Popes, in imitation of the priests of heathen Rome, who had anciently borne it.

enemies were his judges, and being condemned after the same horrible manner as the Welsh prince David, his head was exposed on a pole over London Bridge. Aug. 23.

But when the king had thus made away with one able leader, he did but provoke the Scotch, thereby, to throw themselves more heartily at the disposal of another. Mere policy has taught some invaders to spare the inhabitants as much as possible, paying even liberally for what their army requires, that they may thus tempt the mass of the natives to be indifferent to a change of rulers, and have only the paid soldiery to contend with. But this prudent manner of conducting war, had not then been thought of. The behaviour of every invading army, in those ages, made all the survivors their bitter foes, in the countries they had desolated; except such as were base enough to join an enemy, for the sake of sharing the spoils of their kinsmen and neighbours. It was only after all resistance had been crushed, that king Edward was wont to employ his eminent talents, as if to reconcile the next generation to his government; by making it evident to them, that they had the advantage of living under wiser, and better administered laws, than their forefathers had known.

With this view he now thought it time to provide for the well government of Scotland; and was content to punish the remainder of his late opponents with no farther severity than the levying of fines upon their property. The events which had been passing in England had made it more convenient for the king to replace the Scottish nobility on their estates, where they might, in due time, collect these fines from their tenantry for his treasury, than to continue quartering soldiers upon their exhausted country; who would keep up such scenes of violence as must prevent the cultivation of the land, and consequently make it necessary for him both to feed,

and pay them, from England. The events alluded to had followed from his having already spent much more than his just revenue would supply, in the maintenance of large armies; and in pensions to many of the sovereign princes of the continent, to purchase their aid against the French king.

Edward had employed various devices to draw from his subjects sufficient money for carrying on his ambitious schemes successfully, without tempting them to rebellion by continual and open violations of Magna Charta. Thus, whereas it forbade the imposing of any tax upon the kingdom without the consent of parliament, the king, like any other lord, could still demand sums of money, almost without restriction, from such towns as were reckoned part of his property. This was not called taxing; but *laying on a tallage*. And he repeatedly laid very heavy tallages upon the chief towns in England. The duty paid on wool and hides was also considered as distinct from taxes; and therefore not comprehended within the above-mentioned article of the Great Charter. This Edward raised, at one time, as high as 40 shillings the sack. On which the people remonstrated, telling him that the
A.D. 1299. wool of England amounted to half the value of the whole produce of the land; and that this duty, which was significantly called, *The evil toll*, came to a fifth of the said whole produce. But the king had gone farther than merely eluding the charter. He had once forced the merchants to lend him the whole value of the wool they had exported. Twice he had seized on all the wool and hides, and sold them. At another time, he had ordered the sheriffs to assess their respective counties for so many cattle, and so many hundred quarters of wheat, to be paid for when he should find it convenient. Yet his parliaments had not refused, when called upon, to vote him very liberal aid. And by the *expedient* of regularly summoning a large number

of burgesses to parliament from the smaller, as well as from important towns, he had obtained, through their fear of contending with him, larger grants than the gentry would have made. Thus when the barons and knights of the shires gave the king one pound out of every eleven at which their moveables might be valued, the representatives of the cities and boroughs consented to let him have one in every seven; at which heavier rate, therefore, all laymen below the rank of a knight were taxed.

From the clergy king Edward determined to have more than was paid by any other class of his subjects. And they certainly could spare more than laymen with the same income; the law not allowing them to have wives and children to maintain. But when the king, for two successive years, insisted on having the full half of their incomes, his demand must have produced much real misery. Such a surrender of those comforts to which they have been habituated, as must be made by any body of men, if suddenly compelled to confine their expenditure to half their usual income, will be painful; and must have obliged them to turn numbers of dependents adrift to helpless poverty. In some cases the king turned the monks themselves adrift. For he took possession of all the priories * belonging to foreign abbeys, and dismissed their inhabitants, with the promise of weekly pensions, probably but very seldom paid.

The tax which took from the clergy half their incomes had been conceded by their own votes, at the request of the king; though not until a knight named Havering had entered the hall where they

* It was not unusual for an abbey, possessing distant estates, to send a certain number of monks to take care of the property, and live upon such a portion of its produce, as the parent society chose to assign them. The monk who had the charge of such a colony of his brethren was accountable to the abbot, and bore the inferior title of *prior*; whence this subordinate kind of monastery was called a *priory*.

were debating, and desired such as meant to oppose the grant would stand forward, "that their persons might be known and noticed, as breakers of the king's peace." When, however, they found that Edward was resolved to continue laying such unreasonably heavy burdens upon them, the prelates applied to the pope for protection. But instead of interfering, to have a just proportion maintained between the taxes levied on them and on the laity,

Feb. 1296. Boniface was imprudent enough to issue a bull, by which he forbade the clergy to pay any kind of tax, without his express permission. Accordingly, on the king's next demand of a fifth, the archbishop pleaded this order, as putting it out of their power to comply with his wishes. "You know," said he to the king's officers, "that we have two lords, the one spiritual, the pope; the other temporal, the king. We owe obedience to both, but most to the spiritual authority." He farther offered to consult the pope again upon this subject. But the present sovereign had more firmness than his father, and more prudence than king John. He knew that his barons would dislike, quite as much as himself, to have the plea of the clergy admitted; seeing that pope Boniface's late bull would throw upon the laity the whole burden of bearing the expences of the state. By asking their advice, therefore, he got the nobles pledged to support him in the strong measures which he had determined to adopt. The first of these, was ordering his judges to give formal notice that no monk or priest would be permitted to seek redress in the king's courts, however aggrieved or injured; inasmuch as persons refusing to pay their share of the expences of the state, could have no claim on its protection. But that if any other person had a complaint to make against the monks or clergy, he should have such justice done him as the government *is bound to afford* its obedient subjects. The king

farther issued writs to the sheriffs, bidding them take possession of all ecclesiastical property till farther orders. The clergy of the province * of York had submitted before these writs came out. But in the more extensive province of Canterbury, the estates and chattels of the ecclesiastics were seized; and notice was given to the owners, that whatever they failed to redeem with money before Easter would be finally forfeited. In the course of Lent the prelates and representatives of the clergy held a provincial council, to which the king sent a message, informing them that he should no longer request their consent to *an aid* †, but should insist on their paying a heavy fine for their past insult to his authority. And he strictly forbade their pronouncing the censures of the church against such persons as might have displeased them by their conduct in the present dispute. But the council slighted this message; determined to pay nothing; and ordered, that all persons should be excommunicated who had taken any part in the seizure of their property. After the clergy had separated, archbishop Winchelsey withdrew, attended by a single chaplain, to a country parish; where he began to act as curate, and affected to need the alms of the parishioners for his support.

But all this excited no commotion in the country. It was now seen how much the abuse of excommunications had abated the dread of them. And Pope Boniface, rather unaccountably, made no efforts to support the clergy in that resistance which his bull had absolutely required them to maintain. This is the more surprising, as Boniface drew up and published a formal decree, in which are these words,

* The dioceses whose bishops are under the same archbishop, make up what is called a *province*.

† A tax supposed to be willingly given by the king's subjects, to help him when needful, was called *an aid*, or by a like word from the *Latin*, a *subsidy*.

“ We declare, and determine it to be a necessary article of faith, that every human creature is subject to the Roman pontiff*.” And in another, he insists that kings and private men are alike bound to wait personally upon the pope, if summoned. “ For,” says he, “ such is our pleasure, who, by divine permission, rule the world.” As, however, high sounding words did not terrify the king of England from his purpose, the greater part of the clergy soon came into his terms, to recover their property.

But Edward’s ambitious schemes made his demands, for military service, as burdensome to his nobility, as his call for money was to the ecclesiastics. He wished, at this time, to send two armies to the continent; that he might attack France both on the north and south at once, in Flanders and Guienne; and thus recover the latter Dutchy, and prevent Philip from helping the Scotch. With this view he summoned his barons to meet him in arms at Salisbury; and there he named Bohun, earl of Hereford, High Constable of England, and Bigod, Earl Marshal, as the intended commanders of the forces to be employed. But both the Constable and the Earl Marshal refused to go abroad. According to the feudal customs they were bound to serve the king, in defence of his person, or of the rights of his crown; but not, they said, to take part in an offensive war in Flanders. The king was so angry at this refusal, as to forget his dignity; and to say with an oath, “ Sir earl, you shall go, or hang.” To which the marshal bluntly replied, “ Sir king, I will neither go, nor hang.” When the two earls withdrew, fifteen hundred knights followed in their train.

The firmness of these noblemen drove the king to proceed in a manner, which, by inviting the people to judge of the conduct of their governors,

* See page 75.

sowed the seeds of many future improvements. From a platform in front of Westminster-hall, ^{July.} he addressed a crowd of beholders ; told them that his wars were necessary to save the country from the cruelty of the rebels ; and said, he was about to expose himself to danger for their good. His frank manner won their hearts ; and their shouts expressed their willingness to submit to any sacrifices needful for his support. But when Edward was about to embark, he received a petition in the name of the nobles, prelates, and commonalty of England, complaining that the charters were broken, and that they were nearly ruined by his excessive and unlawful levies of money. To this the king avoided giving a precise answer ; on the plea, that the matters in their petition were too important for him to decide upon, when separated from his council. But it was no sooner known that he had put to sea, leaving the government to his son, under the control of some older persons, than the earls Bohun and Bigod went to the Exchequer, attended by a number of armed followers ; and the former, as high constable, forbade the king's officers to proceed in levying the eighth lately voted in parliament. They then went with the same train to the Guildhall ; and, in their turn, called upon the people to join them in seeking redress. It was a far bolder measure thus openly to oppose a monarch like Edward, than to stand up against John ; especially as the king had managed to be on good terms again with the archbishop ; and had craftily spoken of the opposition made to him by the two earls, as a mere personal quarrel between them and himself, in which the nation could have no interest. But the war took a turn so unfavorable to Edward as prevented his being able to return immediately, and made the people doubt whether he was so wise as they had thought him. On the other hand the earls took care to let the people see they stood for-

ward on public grounds ; and were careful to prevent their armed followers from doing violence to any one. Whilst the archbishop, who had been named one of the prince's guardians, was naturally glad to have the king's power somewhat reduced. He, and his colleagues in council, therefore, affected to consider themselves as obliged to give way ; and after requiring the constable and earl marshal to send in a list of their demands, they consented, in the prince's name, and promised to request that the king also would accede, to the following articles :

1. That all tallages should be so far put on a level with other taxes, that the king should not impose them without the consent of his nobility, prelates, knights, and burgesses.
2. That such seizures of corn, hides, and wool, as had been lately made, should never be repeated.
3. That the evil toll should be done away with.
4. That the charters of king John should be solemnly confirmed ; and read twice a year in the churches ; with the denouncement of excommunication against all violators of the same.
5. That all acknowledged privileges should be duly respected ; and that the earls should be restored to favour.

October. A parliament, assembled in London, received the account of these terms with great joy ; the barons professing their readiness to serve either in England or elsewhere ; and each separate body offering a voluntary aid, on condition of the king's assenting ; with regard to which, however, they required an answer by the sixth of December.

Nov. 5. This assent was given ; though very reluctantly. But when he returned to England, and the two earls, firm to their purpose, required him to ratify his promised concessions, he deferred doing it from time to time ; till they withdrew from court in displeasure. He then commanded the city

ers to collect the people in St. Paul's Church, and read to them his confirmation of the charters. The reading was frequently interrupted by their shouts of gladness, till they heard the king say, "saving the rights of our crown." It was said to every hearer that these words might be so construed, whenever a king should choose, as to annul all that appeared favourable to the rights of the people; so they cried out aloud, that they were but mocked; and burst out into bitter expressions of discontent. The king learned from this experiment, that the nation would not be satisfied with any thing less than the earls Bohun and Fitz-Peter continued to require of him. Being, therefore, too wise to let all his subjects be tempted to become his enemies, Edward called a new parliament, and granted every thing that had been demanded of him. Farther enactments were ^{April,} made after made; commanding that the charters should be sent to all sheriffs and judges; that three knights should be elected by the freeholders in each county to punish violations of them; and that any judgment given in a court of law, in opposition to the articles thereof, should be holden of none effect. The earl marshal, and Bohun earl of Hereford, revered that their memory should be had in honour, for the resolute and prudent manner with which they conducted themselves throughout this dispute; for the judiciousness of the concessions which they made it their aim to obtain, and finally succeeded in obtaining, without the guilt of rebellion or dishonour, from a brave and politic sovereign ardently fond of power. The additions to king John's charters, thus made part of the law of the land, were not less important than Magna Charta itself; extending the same protection to private property as had been given to personal liberty.

At whilst nobles and people had felt a common interest in obliging the king to desist from spoiling

his subjects of their money ; neither nobles, priests, nor people, thought of remonstrating against his spoiling and oppressing their neighbours, the Scotch. They were near losing, by this selfishness, all they had gained. For the conquest of Scotland made the king think himself powerful enough to venture on levying tallages as before. The earl of Hereford was dead, and Bigod, earl marshal, was compelled to resign his estates and honours ; though he received them back again as the king's gift. Still the oaths Edward had taken, to abide by the charters, somewhat alarmed his conscience ; but he sent and requested that the pope would authorise him to commit perjury without incurring its guilt. The like permission, he observed, had been given to his father ; and the present pontiff, accordingly, declared it unnecessary for him to continue to conduct himself as he had sworn he ever would. The necessity of applying to his subjects, however, for their help in combating a new enemy, prevented the king from making a public use of the pope's licence.

A.D. 1305. Soon after the submission of Comyn, Baliol had died ; and his son was Edward's prisoner.

The nearest claimant of the throne, therefore, whom the Scotch could place at their head, was Robert Bruce, grandson of Baliol's rival. He had hitherto gone with the stream ; sometimes opposing, at others soliciting, and obtaining, favours from the king of England. But the tempting prospect of wearing a crown choaked every other feeling of fear or duty. He too could look forward to having the guilt of breaking his oaths to Edward, done away by the pope's sanction, if he should be successful in his enterprise.

With such thoughts in his breast he sought a private interview with Comyn ; and they met in the chapel of a Franciscan monastery at Dumfries. There an angry dispute arose ; and either from rage at finding Comyn likely to

Feb. 10,
1306.

oppose his ambitious projects, or in the suspicion that he had already betrayed his designs to Edward, Bruce drew his dagger, and smote Comyn to the ground, before that altar on which, after the error of the Romish Church, he believed the actual body of his Saviour to be present. After this Bruce immediately rushed out, and told the friends that waited for him, what he had done. Instead of expressing any horror, at learning the crime of their chief, they eagerly asked, "Is he dead?" "I think so," was the reply. "Only think so!" said Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, "I'll make sure." And he straightway entered the house of God, who hath said, *Thou shalt do no murder*; and finding Comyn weltering in his blood, but yet alive, he stabbed the helpless sufferer to the heart. It is asserted, that the descendants of this assassin have chosen for their crest, a hand with a bloody dagger; and as their motto, *I'll make sure*. If so, they thereby openly shew their contempt for the threat, that *the seed of the wicked shall be cut off**. It is indeed a cause of thankfulness to Christians, that they live under that covenant of reconciliation, to which belongs the gracious promise, that *the son who seeth his father's sins, and considereth, and doeth not such like, shall not die for the iniquity of his father*†. But those who ostentatiously bear witness that they allow the deeds of their father‡, cast away the offered mercy of this change in the divine sentence against guilt. If they can think it a matter of boasting to be of the seed of this man, then it is to be feared that the older sentence is already in execution; for to be carnally-minded is death§.

As the murdered nobleman had come to Dumfries to attend King Edward's justiciaries, then in the town, it was regarded as more especially the

* Ps. xxxvii. 28.

† Ezek. xviii. 14. 17.

‡ Luke xi. 48.

§ Rom. viii. 6.

duty of the king to avenge his death, than if he had been slain at any other time, or place. And Bruce well knew that his claim to that crown which Edward meant to usurp, would make the king rejoice in having a fair excuse for putting him to death. He could see, therefore, no choice, but to fight for, and obtain, the empty throne of his ancestors, or die by the hands of the executioner. And he secured for himself the support of the bravest of his countrymen, by declaring, forthwith, that he was their lawful king; and would drive the English out of Scotland, or perish in the attempt. In the course of the next month he had collected followers sufficient to enable him to appear in arms at Scone, the usual place of coronation for the Scottish sovereigns; and there the Countess of Buchan, in right of her family, put the crown upon his head.

March
29th.

When the news of this revolution reached the English court, the king was rapidly declining in health. But his officers, being joined by some of the friends of Comyn, obliged Bruce to fly. Whilst seeking to escape from the power of his adversaries, this newly-crowned king underwent many hardships; being often without other food than herbs, roots, and water. Several of his companions and kinsmen, three of his brothers, and his wife, were taken prisoners. But his activity, resolution, and abilities, made him a fit instrument for recovering the independence of Scotland; and he was preserved from every danger to complete his appointed work; for those good purposes which the Ruler of kingdoms intended to bring to pass thereby.

In the mean while, to tempt the too warlike youth of England to risk their lives with cheerfulness, that they might be honoured as the most forward among the brave, king Edward sent summonses to all who possessed such estates as ought to maintain a knight for his service; requiring that, if not already knighted,

they should attend his court at Westminster by Whitsuntide. His son, the Prince of Wales, lately arrived at man's estate, was then to be admitted into the order of kighthood; and thus qualified to confer the same on the persons summoned. Three hundred sons of knights and nobles were particularly selected to become his brethren in arms; and received from the king dresses of honour, in which they feasted in the gardens of the Temple, vying with each other in rash vows to display their courage. The vow of the king was, to avenge the death of Comyn. And when he reached Carlisle, he proclaimed his determination to punish with a cruel death, not only the murderers, but all who should aid or conceal them. It was the terror of this threat, which led to the surrender of Bruce's queen, and the Countess of Buchan; by persons afraid to protect them. The former was removed to England; but allowed a residence and attendants suited to her rank. But Edward revenged himself on the Countess, by imprisoning her in a wooden cage; and all the horrible severities of the lately-invented punishment for treason were executed on two brothers of Bruce.

Scotland seemed again subdued; and the king returned southwards. But, before the following winter had passed, Bruce came out from his concealment, in Rathlin Isle, on the Irish coast. He had sent a spy before him, to ascertain how his own estates were garrisoned by the English; and bade the man light a fire at Turnbury point, on the shore of Carrick, if he might land in safety. The spy found the English so strong, that he would not have given the signal. But it so happened that a fire was made that night on the appointed spot, by some other person, and for a different purpose. Bruce and his party saw it; landed, and were successful in defeating the English. The news of this success drew the Scotch

Feb. 9,
1307.

to join his standard; and in a few months Bruce marched unresisted over the country.

The slaves of ambition allow themselves no respite from their toils. King Edward, therefore, moved forward from Carlisle on horseback, to undertake the fatigues of another campaign; when so exhausted by age and sickness that the meanest servant in his dominions, if suffering like him, would have thought it a hardship to be refused needful repose. But he had only advanced six miles, before he became worse, and expired at

July 7th,
1307.

Burgh on the Sands, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. He had been half that time a king; and during the greater part of his reign, he had conducted himself as if the God before whom he must appear at its close, had never said, *Thou shalt not covet*. The orphans and widows his sword had made, and the unhappy men whom his summons to war had tempted to sins of pride, and cruelty, and rapine, and lust, would be so many witnesses to the dreadful effects of breaking that commandment. And into such an awful state of blindness had he been suffered to fall, that, having his death in view, instead of charging his son to heal the wounds of the country his ambition had made miserable, he called upon him to swear he would continue the war, and carry about his dead bones with the army, till he had subdued Scotland. Whilst to make up for all the guilt of his past life, and for thus desiring that, even after death, he might continue to stir up neighbours to hate, instead of loving each other, the poor deluded king farther told his son, he had bequeathed 32,000 marks to maintain seven score knights in making war upon the Turks in Palestine; as a means of gaining for himself the favour of that Judge, whose words were, *Blessed are the peacemakers*.

CHAPTER III.

Edward II. surnamed of Caernarvon.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>King of Scotland.</i>	
	A.D.		A.D.
Albert.		Robert I.	
Henry VII.....	1308		
Louis IV.	1314		
<i>Kings of France.</i>		<i>Popes.</i>	
Philip. IV.		Clement V.	
Louis X.....	1314	John XXII.	1316
Philip V.....	1316		
Charles IV.....	1322		
		<i>Greek Emperor.</i>	
		Andronicus.	

EDWARD of Caernarvon was in his twenty-^{July 7,} fourth year, when he succeeded his father as ^{1307.} king of England: and was acknowledged by the Scottish nobles, assembled at Dumfries, as their sovereign also. He could not, however, but be conscious that the Scotch regarded him as an usurper; and that the dread of seeing their country made miserable, by the hostile progress of the English army, alone made them overlook, what they thought in their hearts, the juster claims of Robert Bruce. Under such circumstances the wisdom of this world would have urged the young king to push forward in search of Bruce, while the latter was but timidly supported; and to persist, without shrinking from any fatigues, in hunting him down, if needful, from isle to isle. A higher wisdom would have made Edward most anxious to employ his power in repairing the injustice to which ambition had tempted his father, and in healing the wounds his sword had made. Had he, with this view, invited Edward Baliol to revisit

the land of his ancestors, and reclaim his inheritance; and had he frankly declared him, as independent of the English crown as his predecessors were, the Scotch would gladly have received a countryman, unstained with Comyn's blood, for their king. Their revengeful invasions of England would not have driven Edward's subjects to disaffection; and if his peculiar infirmity had offended the English nobles, he might have found a grateful and an useful friend in the king of Scotland.

But Edward II. had neither the wisdom to give up an unjust claim, nor the worldly prudence necessary to enforce it. He declared his determination to treat Robert Bruce and his adherents as rebels, but he at the same time quitted the army; and allowed his father's ample preparations for conquest to be wasted or dispersed. His heart was set on vain shows, and the mischievous society of flatterers. Of these last Piers de Gaveston, a Gascon page, was his favourite.

The late king had seen with grief the influence which this insinuating young courtier possessed over his son; and when Gaveston farther irritated him by persuading the prince to break, with other idle companions, into the treasurer's park and kill his deer, Edward I. sent him back into Gascony, and charged his son, under a father's curse, never to recall him. But weak characters are always peculiarly impatient of such control as they most especially need. The new monarch was but the more eager to have Gaveston again by his side, and to load him with honors; as if this marked neglect of his dying father's earnest advice afforded himself the most satisfactory proof that he had at length got free from the irksome restraint of paternal authority. Having, therefore, dismissed his father's old counsellors, and ordered the treasurer to be arrested, *Aug. 6* Edward II. issued letters patent, even before he could set out for England, creating Gaves-

ton earl of Cornwall; and granting him therewith such privileges and extensive property in that county as made him almost its sovereign. And as if this were not enough, the same document conferred on the favourite castles and manors in Devon, Somerset, Wilts, Sussex, Rutland, Berkshire, and Yorkshire. The money which his father had laid up to save his soul, as he ignorantly supposed, by hiring knights to combat the infidels in Palestine, was next bestowed by the king on Gaveston.

All this profusion was at the expence of the crown; and, therefore, producing no immediate pressure on the subjects, it excited no alarming murmurs. But Edward soon went abroad, to marry Isabella Dec. 25. daughter of Philip king of France; and the English nobility were justly offended by his appointing this upstart companion of his idle hours to be Regent of England during his absence. It was clearly the king's interest to uphold the rule, which commands that *honour* be given to *whom honour*, by law or custom, *is due*; for he himself had no other claims to such honour as his subjects were willing to pay him. But Edward violated that rule in the face of his people; when the nobles, who attended to offer respect to their sovereign and his queen, on her landing at Dover, were passed by unnoticed, whilst he rushed into the arms of Gaveston; whom they, not many months back, had punished as a deer stealer. The coronation took place soon after; and there the old nobility of the land were again publicly affronted, by the king's Feb. 24,
1308. selecting Gaveston to carry his crown, and walk next his person.

Edward had not that firmness which might have awed the barons into submitting to such slights. They had threatened to interrupt the coronation, if Gaveston was not again sent out of England; and the king only obtained their forbearance, by promising to call a parliament at Easter, and to comply with what-

ever they should then request. In the mean while Gaveston, instead of bearing his undeserved honours meekly, procured leave, which had just been publicly refused to the great body of the nobility, to hold a tournament within the precincts of Wallingford castle ; which had been lately given him, out of the estates usually set apart for the queen's maintenance. This was so favourite an amusement in that age, that his invitation was accepted by several warlike old nobles, companions in arms of the late king. But Gaveston bent on humbling them, had engaged all the young and robust adventurers he could allure into his service ; and so arranged the matches, that the greatest and haughtiest of the earls found themselves speedily unhorsed, or otherwise disgraced before the spectators. It became farther known to these powerful chieftains, that their peculiarities or failings, supplied Gaveston with by-names for them ; that the bold bearing of the Earl of Lancaster was caricatured, by calling him *The Stage Player* ; and that the Earl of Pembroke was spoken of by the favourite in the king's presence, as *Joseph the Jew*, in ridicule of his sallow complexion. For such low and easy wit did Edward exchange that honour which his subjects would willingly have paid him ; and which they whom the world calls wise too often sell their own souls to obtain.

When the parliament met, Gaveston found that April. his folly, in exasperating persons naturally but too much disposed to envy his favour, had made the barons unanimous in insisting on his being ordered out of the country for life. To avoid a severer sentence he was fain to swear, that he would never accept a recall ; and the bishops endeavoured to make this oath the more binding, by pronouncing him excommunicated before-hand, if ever he should neglect it. The king assented to these measures ; but without concealing his vexation. He

cly pledged himself, indeed, to let Gaveston the kingdom, as advised by his parliament, on the 24th of June. But in the mean while, he gave him his niece Margaret, sister of the Earl of Gloucester, in marriage ; and made this a pretext for adding still farther grants of estates, both in England and Guienne. By the day prescribed, however, Gaveston embarked at Bristol ; whither Edward had accompanied him. But the indignation of the nobles was naturally great, at hearing the favourite had only quitted England to be Governor of Ireland, with ampler powers than of his predecessors in that office.

A year did not pass, before the childish fondness of the king made him solicit from the pope such a dispensation, as the latter presumptuously claimed the power of giving, for Gaveston to break the oath he had solemnly taken. The permission was granted, the exile was immediately recalled ; the king himself crossing the country to meet his favourite at Chester, and conducting him in triumph to the royal residence of Langley, Hertfordshire.

July,
1309.

For awhile the barons were soothed, by the promises of Edward, and the submissive language of Gaveston, to suffer this breach of faith to his parliament. But the imprudent vanity of the Gascon displayed itself as offensively as ever ; and the partiality with which the king permitted his suggestions to overrule every other counsellor's advice, made it evident to all who loved their country, that this mischievous flatterer must not be allowed to approach his weak master's ear. The extravagance of Edward's grants helped to undo his favourite ; by making it necessary to summon a parliament for aid to maintain the royal household. The nobles knew the king's poverty. And when they were called to attend, so long as their enemy should remain at court, the king's profusion soon drove him

to such straights, that he was fain to desire Gaveston would withdraw to some place of concealment. His wants, and his alarm at seeing the barons accompanied by numerous followers in arms, when at length they chose to attend his summons, **Mar.** impelled the king to resign himself, like an **1310.** infant, to the guidance of a committee of peers, chosen by parliament, with the title of *Lords Ordainers*; by whose ordinances, to be published with the sanction of his name, all grievances were to be redressed.

They proceeded very deliberately; taking little notice of Gaveston's again returning to court, and receiving farther gifts from the royal domains. Nor did they interfere with the king's marching an army into Scotland and giving the command of it to his inexperienced favourite. But when they had drawn up, and published such ordinances as they thought

necessary, it appeared that, besides general **Aug.** regulations, such as the important one, that **1311.** a parliament should be held once every year at least, they had decreed the perpetual banishment of Gaveston. An order was also annexed to this decree, commanding all the king's subjects to treat Gaveston as a public enemy; if found within any of Edward's dominions, English or foreign, after the first of November next.

On receiving this ordinance the king complained bitterly; and entreated to be spared the pain and humiliation of yielding to such interference. But the barons were firm; and neither Edward nor Gaveston felt strong enough to resist their power. The two friends separated with tears; and the favourite withdrew to France. There queen Isabella's father would have cast him into prison; had he not escaped into Flanders. Of wandering in disgrace, however, he was soon weary: and the *Lords Ordainers*, from whose irksome presence the *king* had withdrawn to York, heard, before the close

of the year, that their infatuated sovereign and his foolish companion were again together. The barons were now determined to trust their promises, or oaths, no longer; but gathered, in arms, towards the North to put *the ordinances* in force. At the head of this formidable company was the Earl of Lancaster, the king's cousin; being son, by the widow of the king of Navarre, of that Prince Edward, who had borne the title of king of Sicily. He was the most powerful subject of the crown: having united in his own person, by inheritance and marriage, the earldoms of Lincoln, Leicester, Salisbury and Derby, as well as Lancaster: to which titles an almost supreme authority, and very extensive estates in those counties, were then annexed. His father-in-law, the Earl of Lincoln, was very lately dead; and had made it his dying request that he would consider his ample possessions, and his influence, as entrusted to him by the Almighty; to be employed in protecting the church, and his fellow-subjects, against the aggressions of either the pope or king. He had farther charged him, to listen with particular attention to the advice of Guy, Earl of Warwick; whose experience was greater than his. It was in compliance with both these charges, that the Earl of Lancaster now marched with Guy; and took that prominent situation which belonged to him amongst the Lords Ordainers.

At their approach king Edward fled by sea from Bamborough, though besought with May, 1312. tears by his pregnant queen, to remain with her. It was to place his favorite in safety in the strong castle of Scarborough that he deserted her. But the castle proved ill provided for a siege; and Gaveston, soon after the king's departure, surrendered himself to the earl of Pembroke, on receiving from that nobleman a solemn promise, that he should be safely conveyed to his own castle of Wallingford; to await there the terms which might be agreed

upon between the king and the barons. But at a village in Oxfordshire, from which the earl had turned aside to visit his countess in Deddington castle, Guy earl of Warwick carried him off from the attendants under whose charge he had been left. Gaveston, in the days of his prosperity, had been used to call the earl of Warwick by no better name, than *the black Dog of Arderne*; and he was now insultingly told, that he would find the dog had teeth. A council of nobles assembled at Warwick condemned him to death, on the ground of that ordinance which had declared him a public enemy; and though he begged mercy from the earl of Lancaster, calling him *Gentle Earl*, he found that the enemies his jesting scoffs had made, were not to be soothed by humble language, which was too plainly nothing but the effect of terror. Blacklow-hill, an eminence near Warwick, happened to be within the earl of Lancaster's jurisdiction; and that the responsibility of executing the sentence, which his party had passed upon the unhappy favorite, might fall on the person best able to bear the king's indignation, Gaveston was led there and put to death. So June 19. perished this thoughtless young man; a striking example of the way in which *the ungodly often prosper in the world and increase in riches*, when God chooses in His wrath to set them in *slippery places*, that He may cast them down into destruction, as in a moment *.

After this severe measure the Lords Ordainers sent the king word, that they should proceed farther, unless the terms agreed upon in the last parliament were, henceforward, faithfully observed. And when two papal nuncios, one of them a cardinal, presented the barons with letters from the pope, and expressed their readiness to interpose; the barons answered them haughtily, that they were unlettered soldiers,

who cared not to see what the pope had written—that there were in the kingdom honest and learned prelates, whose advice they were ready to receive—but that they would not suffer any Roman courtiers, or any other foreigners, to meddle between them and their sovereign, on any pretence whatever. The English bishops came forward on hearing this; and when they undertook to mediate between Edward and the nobility, it was seen how little the fondness of the idle and thoughtless for each other's society deserves the name of friendship. Instead of stipulating that the character of Gaveston should be cleared up, and that his enemies should acknowledge him innocent of various disgraceful charges which they had brought against him, such as defrauding his kind master of money; the bishops found the king mainly urgent to have Gaveston's horses and expensive trinkets surrendered to himself. To this desire the barons readily yielded. The list of the late favourite's plate and jewels drawn up for the king's satisfaction still remains; and the enumeration of the various articles would fill a side of a modern newspaper. Having got back these costly toys, in which he and Gaveston delighted, like overgrown children; and being much taken up with receiving presents and compliments on the birth of his son, afterwards Edward III., the king was soon cheerful again. The next year he was prevailed upon to grant separate charters of pardon to all the nobles concerned in Gaveston's death; after which he and his queen went to Paris to see a coronation.

Oct.
1313.

Up to this period of Edward the Second's reign, the barons had been but little disposed to assist him in keeping Scotland under subjection. Bruce, therefore, had gradually driven the English before him; first compelling them to confine themselves within the fortified towns; and latterly obtaining possession of *those towns also*, either by surprising or

starving the garrisons. Edinburgh had very lately fallen into his hands; and the English governor of Stirling sent Edward word, that he had been constrained to pledge himself to surrender his important fortress, unless relieved by reinforcements from England before the 24th of June.

On hearing this, Edward, being at peace with his nobles, collected a more considerable force than he had ever before been able to assemble, since the dispersion of that which his father had formed. On the eve of the appointed day he arrived within sight of Stirling at the head of, at least, 30,000 men. The army of Bruce might not be much inferior to his in numbers; but was very much so in its appointments. His horse especially were too weak to stand the charge of the well-mounted knights of England. The Scotch king, therefore, stood upon the defensive, and, making all his horsemen dismount, he placed himself between Stirling and the English army. Before the latter came up, he had caused a number of narrow pits to be dug in the ground in his front; over them were laid hurdles, covered and concealed with sods; on which a foot soldier might pass, but which would be sure to give way to the trampling of a horse. As the mist cleared off in the morning, the English perceived their adversaries drawn up in order of battle; but all on their knees. "They are already kneeling to beg your mercy;" said a knight of Edward's company. "Do not deceive yourself," replied a northern baron, "they are begging for mercy; but it is only of God."

For awhile the English bowmen made their opponents shrink from the volley of arrows. But, as Bruce had foreseen, the brave gentry of England were impatient to come to close quarters, and rushed to the combat, charging their horses, at full gallop, across the plain; and then the covering of the pits gave way under them, and the fall of the foremost

brought their followers upon them. The consequent confusion and dismay was skilfully taken advantage of by Bruce ; and the Scotch gained an easy and complete victory. The plunder of the English camp, and the ransoms afterwards paid by the numerous captives to recover their liberty, enriched the country which Edward the First's ambition had desolated so long. And his less guilty son, after having shewn his troops that he was not deficient in personal courage, was compelled to quit the field ; from whence he hastened to Dunbar, and returned by sea to England, almost unaccompanied.

Bruce, being now entirely master of Scotland, would gladly have come to terms of peace with the English. But as Edward, though willing to treat, refused to give him the title of king, their subjects were condemned to continue exposed to the calamities of war, till the pride of one, or both their sovereigns, should be farther humbled.—The Scotch king, who was the more worldly wise of the two, sent his brother Edward Bruce to Ireland at the head of a numerous body of followers ; now too long accustomed to rapine and bloodshed, for returning to the peaceful occupations of agriculture, or domestic service, in their native country. The state of Ireland gave the Scotch considerable reason to hope they might wrest it permanently from the English crown. The different adventurers who, rather than the kings of England, had been engaged for near 150 years in efforts to subdue its unhappy natives, were still in reality masters only of the eastern and southern coasts, and principal towns. The rancour which such a protracted warfare had excited, between the Irish and these invaders, had brought each to a state far more like that of beasts of prey, than like the proud gentry whose quarrels disturbed the peace of England or France, but whose love of praise frequently checked their more brutal passions. Hence, the *settlement of the English, or Normans,*

on estates forcibly taken from the natives of Ireland, having been followed by increased wickedness and misery among their respective descendants, the Irish most gladly received Bruce's offers to aid them in expelling their common foe. As soon as the
 May 25, 1315, Scotch landed on the opposite coast of

Ulster, Edward Bruce was joined by the clan of the O'Niels: and their united forces advanced after the manner of North American savages, burning and destroying whatever fell in their way; especially where they were unresisted. The devastation extended into Meath, and was imitated by the native Irish in several parts of Leinster; so that the success of his partizans encouraged the Scotch general to take the title of king of Ireland.
 1316.

In the mean while England had been visited with such calamities, as put it quite out of Edward's power to send over any considerable force in aid of his Irish partizans.

Up to the defeat at Bannockburn, the government of Edward II. had not been, on the whole, unfavourable to the happiness of the English nation; though his weakness of character had shewn itself in conduct exceedingly irritating to the nobles, and had brought his person into contempt with such as lived about the court. The growing commerce of England had not been checked by any wars with the chief seats of trade and manufactures on the continent. And the king's aversion to such toils and fatigues as he must have exposed himself to, by adopting the warlike tastes of his nobility, had led him to take an interest rather in peaceful occupations. He repeatedly published proclamations forbidding, under severe penalties, the holding of tournaments; whilst he took pleasure in encouraging shipping*; afforded liberal protection to foreign

* The mariner's compass was invented very early in this century. Till this most useful instrument was devised, no pilot could tell what course he was steering; if the clouds hid the

merchants ; and claimed the protection of foreign governments for his own subjects *. He is the first sovereign, since the conquest, who is mentioned as paying personal attention to agriculture. He had also issued various orders in favour of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge ; which were then exceedingly flourishing in point of numbers ; Oxford alone, being said to contain about 30,000 students. This is ten times as many as it has at present. But the greater part of these scholars were not, as now, men devoting the hours of manhood to study. They were mere boys, from ten years old and upwards, preparing for admission into the numerous monasteries, which had got possession of so large a portion of the country ; and which held out more certain means of maintenance, and to larger numbers, if they would but turn monks, than any other calling could offer. These crowds of boys and youths, were lodged in hotels, or inns †, subject to no discipline, and frequently disturbing the peace of the university by battles with the townsmen, or be-

heavenly bodies from his view, after he had lost sight of land. But the magnetised needle of the compass, directing itself to a known point, enables the mariner to tell the quarter towards which his ship is moving when neither the land, the sun, nor the stars are visible. The name of Admiral, for a naval commander, was now introduced, being an imitation of a title in use amongst the Arabs.

* No less than ten letters are still extant, written by Edward II. to the emperor of Constantinople, his Empress, the king of Sicily, and other powerful personages in the south of Europe, requesting them to take measures for the deliverance of Sir Giles de Argenteyn, an Englishman unjustly detained in captivity by the Greeks at Thessalonica. The king's interference procured this gentleman's release ; but he only came home to perish in the battle of Bannockburn. He had gratefully devoted himself to the protection of Edward's person ; and having conducted the king safely out of the field of battle, he returned, and throw himself on the foremost of the Scotch, to prevent their pursuing his sovereign.

† The students who resorted to London, to attend the courts of law, were lodged in like manner ; and their abodes are still, in consequence, called *Inns of court*.

tween students from different divisions of the kingdom, who regarded each other as of different nations. As the numbers engaged, and the fierceness of these battles, sometimes led to the loss of many lives, good men became justly anxious to prevent or diminish these glaring evils. Hence some benevolent persons had lately begun to build distinct habitations, such as we now call *colleges*, in which instructors and their pupils might reside apart from the other inhabitants of the town. At Oxford, Edward himself founded Oriel college, for this purpose; and to Peter-house, the first college established on this footing at Cambridge, he granted permission to receive gifts of lands and houses, without impediment from the Mortmain act.

To the friars and monks he was kind, without wasting upon them the estates of the crown. But his good opinion of them exposed him to be deceived in weightier matters than property. The following is an instance of the profaneness with which they ventured to employ the name of God in covering their frauds; and of the evil effect of that reliance on their word, which led Edward to encourage, when he must otherwise have detected their iniquity. Having made an offering at the shrine of St. Alban, in Hertfordshire, he happened to move from thence to Ely, and was perplexed at finding there another shrine of the same saint. His perplexity was not the less for hearing the monks of Ely and St. Albans, each assert, with equal positiveness, that the dead body of this popular British martyr * was in the shrine belonging to their respective monasteries. As it was plain that both assertions could not be true, the king told the Bishop of Ely that he must have the shrine opened; in order to know at which place it was best to worship the relics of the saint. It does not seem to have oc-

* See page 55. Vol. I.

to him, that if a body should happen to be in each shrine, he could not tell whether was the true Alban; nor, of either, which. Monks of Ely, however, were much alarmed; after some demur, they agreed that the king should be obeyed. He, the bishop, and the prior, accordingly attended in the church, whilst Alan of Wingham, a monk skilled in goldsmith's work, proceeded to draw out the nails and unscrew the which fastened the shrine together, till they got to a coffer, the lid of which king Edward opened with his own hands, and found it so filled with coarse shaggy cloth, that there was no room for any thing else. The crafty Alan now bid the king observe some clots of blood on the cloth, "as," says another monk who records the story, "as if it had been shed the day before." So no wonder it had. But the Ely priests declared with much voice, that the cloth before them could be no other else than the military cloak in which St. Alban must have been beheaded. They were not enough to add, that the fresh appearance of blood was the work of God, done to honour the

The simple king was as confident that what he boldly said must be true, as if he had quite forgotten their late positive assertion, that the shrine contained Alban's body. He, therefore, the clergy, and the other by-standers, after their examination on their faces to the ground; some in real, some in pretended amazement at the supposed miracle. The scene ended with Edward's making offerings to the saint; and the monks gravely adding, whilst their deceived monarch said to them, "God works many miracles here, for the sake of our garment, believe henceforward, that He does more at St. Alban's for the sake of the very holy which rests there."

besides the king's intentional encouragement of his able pursuits, the disagreements between him

and his barons had prevented his being able to get their consent to the imposing on either the agriculture, or commerce, half those burdens which had checked their progress in the preceding reign. And he did not feel himself strong enough to enforce demands, like his father, beyond the law.

The clergy had enjoyed the same benefit of easier taxation; partly on account of the king's consciousness of his want of power, and partly on account of his being, in a considerable degree, exempt from that superstitious deference to the popes, which had made Henry III. submit to seeing England pillaged by papal exactions. The influence of the popes, cotemporary with Edward II., was in fact very inferior to what their predecessors had for some ages possessed. This diminution of influence was partly the effect of men's reflections on the evident and gross misconduct of those predecessors. But there were other circumstances, which weighed more with minds like Edward's. Pope Boniface VIII. had been arrested by order of Philip, king of France; and the shock which his haughty spirit received from this insult, had been his death. Yet, instead of requiring from the king any such humiliating penance as Henry II. had been driven to undergo for causing the death of Becket, the successor of Boniface had acknowledged that Philip justly defended the rights of his crown. And Clement V., a Gascon by birth, being notoriously raised to the popedom by Philip's intrigues, was less regarded as sovereign of the church, than as, still, a subject of the French king; whose dominions he never quitted, and by whom he had been bound down to very severe conditions, before his election was carried.

Very early in Edward's reign the subserviency of this pope had been exhibited to all Europe in a most disgraceful light. For the king of France having *laid before him* such charges against the wealthy

order of the Templars *, as were at once too horrible and too absurd to make it likely that either he or Clement thought them true ; the latter, to gratify the king, issued a bull enjoining the different monarchs of Christendom to arrest every Templar in their dominions, and take possession of all their property. And when no credible witnesses could be found to prove the truth of the king's accusations, the pope sanctioned his putting a number of the knights to frightful tortures ; whereby some of them were compelled to cry out, *We confess our guilt*. For when the pain was past endurance, these unhappy victims knew that no other cry would stop their tormentors. And yet the pope was obliged to acknowledge, in the public document which confirmed the abolition of the order, that, Whereas strict law would not justify his sentence, he proceeded therein by his power of providing, like the apostles, for extraordinary cases.

When Edward II. received the first of these bulls, he wrote forthwith to the kings of Spain, Portugal and Sicily; telling them, that he ^{Dec. 4, 1307.} had been desired to imprison all the Templars living in his dominions, without any previous trial.—That he could not but attribute this evil suggestion to the covetousness, or malice, of those from whom it proceeded—And that, as he would not lend a credulous ear, to the charges made against the knights of this renowned order ; so he besought each of these monarchs, to act with the like just caution, till the guilt of the parties accused could be fairly proved. But though he thus published his belief that the pope was either deceived, or actuated by criminal motives ; some new adviser, or the tempting thoughts of the wealth to be gained by assailing the Templars, soon induced Edward to change his mind. He, accordingly, dispatched a messenger to

* See Vol. I. p. 474.

the sheriffs, throughout England, Wales, and Scotland; who, after binding them to secrecy, gave them letters from the king; in which they were commanded to collect a sufficient force against the morrow of the
1308. following Epiphany, and then to proceed therewith and arrest every Templar within their respective counties, and take possession of all the property belonging to the order.

In France the Grand Master of the Templars was burnt to death; as were all those knights who, after confessing themselves guilty, had re-asserted their innocence when torture was over. The king of England had too much humanity to imitate these atrocities, and when a council, held at Vienne in France, ordered that the lands lately possessed by the Templars should be made over to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, afterwards called knights of Malta, Edward consented to give the latter the manors which he had seized; but very properly protested that he made this transfer of the land by his own free choice; not meaning to allow, that the pope and council could have any right to dispose of estates held under his crown. He also mercifully insisted that the knights of St. John should allow each English Templar fourpence a day *, for his maintenance in the monastery where he was to pass his life as a penitent. Thus ended this once popular and powerful military order; whose professed devotion to the honour and peculiar service of God added fearfully to the guilt of the dissolute habits of its members, however innocent they might be of the monstrous offences imputed to them by men, who would have thought it little to charge them with the habitual commission of any ordinary sins.

If Edward was conscious to himself, that sordid

* The provincial master of the Templars was to be allowed 2s. a day; and their late chaplains were to have 3d. a day to buy food, and 20s. at Easter and Michaelmas, to purchase other necessaries.

views had alone made him yield to the pope's wishes, and join in condemning the Templars on insufficient evidence; whilst his milder nature had shrunk from imitating the cruelties sanctioned by the head of the Romish church; this must have given him an ill opinion of the papal court; and may account for his resisting many of its proceedings with more firmness than he exhibited in other parts of his conduct. Thus when Clement had given one of the papal courtiers the treasurership of York cathedral; and summoned the English ecclesiastic who held that office, on the king's presentation, to appear before him, and answer for his contumacy, in not resigning it; king Edward sent the pope word, that he would not allow his subject to attend to the summons. At another time, when the pope had given the Deanery of St. Paul's to his own nephew, the archbishop of Bourdeaux, Edward wrote him a letter, stating; that whereas there were duties attached to this office which could only be performed on the spot, he requested it might not be bestowed on a person who must intend to neglect them; and that if the duties for which estates had been made over to the church, were not performed, the heirs of the donors would have a right, by the law of England, to reclaim them. In this case the king afterwards gave way, and suffered the pope to heap on his relation several other English benefices; besides letting him hold the Deaneries of Lincoln and St. Paul's together.

There were other cases in which Edward found himself unable to prevent the pope from making English bishops by his own authority; but the king never would allow the bishops, thus forced upon him, to enter on the estates attached to their sees, till they had publicly and formally acknowledged that they received their lands as his gift, and that they entirely renounced all pretensions to claim them by virtue of the pope's bulls. He required this acknowledgement and renunciation, even where it had been

at his own request that the pope had taken upon him to set aside the person elected by the English chapter, and put in a bishop of his own nomination.

King Edward's partialities particularly tempted him to this indiscreet encouragement of papal interference, when such sees were to be filled up as were most coveted by his courtiers. Thus, when the monks of Canterbury had elected Thomas Cobham, surnamed *The good clerk*, the king petitioned Clement to give the archbishopric to Walter Reynolds, Bishop of Worcester. And the pope, accordingly,

Oct. 1, 1313. directed a bull to the monks, in which he told them, that in his anxiety to have the mother church of Canterbury well filled, and with the foresight becoming a successor of the Apostles, he had resolved, before the last archbishop died, that, whenever a vacancy should occur, he would himself select a fit person; and had, therefore, determined that any election made by others should be void;—that he understood they, not knowing of his resolution, had elected Thomas Cobham;—that he had no personal objection to the man they had chosen; but must adhere to what he had *previously* resolved on doing.—And did, therefore, in the fulness of his power, annul their election; and bestow the archbishopric of Canterbury on Walter Reynolds.

How far the pope was from being truly anxious to have this important office filled by one who would zealously perform its duties soon appeared, from his sending Reynolds unasked permission to neglect or violate his duty as archbishop, in various particulars therein specified; as by trusting the care of souls to youths under the lawful age; and allowing forty priests to hold several benefices together, all laws to the contrary notwithstanding. But the awful disregard manifested by the pope, in declaring this transaction to be the consequence of his *previous* determination to look out, himself, for a fit person, *appears* beyond dispute from a letter afterwards

written by king Edward to the college of cardinals; in which he expresses his obligation to the late pope, for having attended to his earnest request, in making Reynolds archbishop; but complains that the sum demanded by the papal court, as a remuneration for this attention to his wishes, was more than could be raised from the estates belonging to the see of Canterbury. The king adds, that he understood the pope, to ease his conscience, had, on his death bed, remitted all debts then due to him; and that he trusts, the cardinals will let archbishop Reynolds have the benefit of the pope's intentions. Nov. 19,
1314.

The Bishopric of Durham was the subject of similar disgraceful proceedings. When Edward II. came to the throne, Antony de Beck was bishop of Durham; and was admired in that age for being the proudest among the nobles at court, and a bold warrior in the camp; whilst his habit of profane swearing was thought to give life to his conversation. Nor was his character only popular with soldiers, whose habits he imitated in peace as well as war. Clement V. who knew De Beck, liked him so much as to give him the title of Patriarch of Jerusalem: which though but an empty name, was esteemed one of the highest honors a pope could bestow. And a writer far more conscientious than pope Clement, praises the bishop for "greatness of spirit," shown, to use his own words, in behaving "as though he might do what he would, without fear of rebuke." Of this indifference to the restraint that fear of blame imposes on many, who have not the fear of God before their eyes, De Beck gave several notable examples; such as throwing the chief tenants of his bishopric into jail, for telling him, that though bound to defend his church, they were not obliged to aid him in an invasion of Scotland. His bidding the fierce borderers in his service besiege the priory of Durham and drag the prior from his seat near the altar,

which even they shuddered to think of doing another instance. So mistaken are the views of right and wrong which will prevail, whenever *the law of the Lord*, which *is perfect* *His testimony* which *maketh wise the simple* *, fallen into neglect.

On the death of Antony de Beck the king asked the monks of Durham to elect a foreigner, Antony de Pisana, for their bishop: but they were told that the person thus recommended was actually too young; and naturally preferred electing one of their own body, Richard of Kellaw. Nor did the king object to confirm their choice. In 1316, however, Richard also died. The court happened, at that time, to be in York; and the king, the earl of Lancaster, and the earl of Hereford, had each a favourite candidate to propose. The monks, however, threatened, again chose a brother Richard Henry of Stamford; and Edward was again disposed to acquiesce in their overlooking his recommendation; but knew not how to resist the entreaties of his queen Isabella, who threw herself on her knees before him to beg that he would procure and insist upon, the promotion of her kinsman, John De Beaumont; a Frenchman already possessed of several preferments in the English Church. Henry of Stamford was, therefore, obliged to visit the court to obtain the confirmation of his election. On his arrival there, he found that Isabella's brother, the king of France, had joined Edward in requesting the pope to set aside the choice of the monks and confer the bishopric on De Beaumont. The powerful intercession left the friendless English monk little prospect of obtaining justice; but the pope could scarcely have been aware how he exposed his own indifference to truth, in the decree which he issued on this occasion. Being unable to discover any thing wrong in the election of Richard

* Psalm xix. 7.

amford, to serve as an excuse for annulling it, John XXII. tells king Edward that his predecessor Clement had especially decreed that the see of Durham should not be filled up by those to whom the right of electing a bishop might otherwise have belonged.—That out of his fatherly care for the said church, he, John, confirms this decree ; and in order to provide it with a shepherd after his own heart.”—And that after anxious thought, and consultation held with his brethren the cardinals, he determined on appointing Louis de Beaumont ; a man to whom his attention had been drawn by his *learning*, as well as many other advanced and desirable qualities.

On reading this bull, which is still extant, the historian turns to a popish chronicler of that day, describing the consecration of De Beaumont, how the bishop, not understanding Latin, took an interpreter, to teach him to pronounce the words which he was to repeat in the course of that public ceremony ; and that being impatient of the mistakes he saw himself committing, in his attempt to pronounce the word *Metropoliticae*, he said in French, *let it pass for said.*” And it must be remembered that the knowledge of Latin was then not merely a high accomplishment, or a step towards studying the Scriptures in their original language. He who ignorant of Latin could not look into the word *Scriptures* at all. For the Scriptures had not yet been translated into either English or French. Nor could the people, in company, with his heart, the prayers used in church ; for they too were written, and offered up in Latin. An usage still continued in the Church ; notwithstanding St. Paul’s remarks on the uselessness of praying before the people in a tongue which they do not understand *. As were the people of Durham committed to the care of a bishop, who being at once ignorant of

* See 1 Cor. xiv.

English, the native language of his flock, and of those languages in which the word of God was still shut up, could neither give instruction, nor receive it. What they would learn from the example of their blind shepherd, may be imagined, from his summoning together the men of blood, whose violence was then making the northern counties miserable, and putting himself at their head to slay the archbishop of York; if he had not desisted from his very proper intention, of entering the diocese of Durham to enquire into the state of the Church. So large a sum seems to have been demanded from De Beaumont by the pope, for his share in the crime of entrusting a portion of Christ's flock to so unfit a pastor, that, even five years after, we find the king soliciting John XXII. to allow the bishop of Durham farther time, for paying what still remained due.

It is said of the children of Israel, that *when the Lord slew them, then they sought Him; they returned, and enquired early after God* *. But king Edward could have reaped no instruction from what was passing. His eyes saw, to no purpose, the most conspicuous manifestations of the Almighty's power to destroy and to afflict. Otherwise he would have anxiously sought for a bishop who could teach him and his people, to return from all their evil ways, and attain to the knowledge of God; instead of consenting to receive, much less to ask for, such a bishop as De Beaumont. For this appointment had taken place amidst very severe national calamities. The Holy Spirit invites men to consider, when they witness such things, whether *there can be evil, that is misery, in a city, and the Lord hath not done it* †? and if He hath done it, *mercy and judgment have, assuredly, each their part in His work*. When *the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity* ‡, He thereby

* Ps. lxxviii. 34.

† Amos iii. 6.

‡ Isa. xxvi. 21.

putteth His fear into the hearts of those *on whom He will have mercy*; and that *fear is*, to them, *the beginning of wisdom*. Archbishop Bradwardine must have gained his invaluable share of this true wisdom during the unhappy period of which we are speaking; and as his faithful manner of declaring scriptural truths, offensive to the natural pride of man, was listened to by many, in Oxford, with delight, we may rejoice over them also; as permitted to find the *savour of life unto life*, in the scenes of misery around them. A fuller account of Bradwardine will properly belong to the next reign. But the detail of that succession of calamities which now befel our country would have been too painful, without the consoling reflection, that as some traces of their beneficial effects became visible in that good man and his willing scholars, so we may confidently trust there were many others who found reason to bless the pain or sorrow which led them to set their affections on things above.

The harvest of 1314 had been so deficient, that the king granted licences for the importation of corn from France. But by the end of the following January, the prices of all kinds of victuals had risen to such a height, that labourers could scarcely procure, by their earnings, enough of the poorest food to maintain life. Wishing to remedy this, the parliament passed a law, fixing the highest price which sellers might ask, under forfeiture of all they had brought to market. These prices were as follows*. For an ox, fattened on corn, 3*l.* 12*s.*; on grass, but 2*l.* 8*s.* For a fat two-year-old pig 10*s.* For a fat sheep 4*s.* without, or 5*s.* with the fleece. For a good hen, or four young pigeons, 3*d.* To judge of these prices, it should be observed, that the rent of land about Tunbridge, was in settled times, ten

* In this, and the following pages, prices are given in money of our times.

years after this, 9*d.* an acre for arable land, 1*s.* for meadow, and 3*d.* for pasture. And that, somewhat later in this century, the wages of a master carpenter were 9*d.* a day.

The attempt to oblige sellers to forego the prices, which the wants of their customers made them ready to bid, necessarily increased the evil it was intended to remedy. For it tempted those, who had spare produce by them, to keep away from the markets; knowing they should obtain more by making bargains privately at home, whither such as had money, and wanted food, would be sure to follow them. And if the law could have compelled the farmers to bring their produce to the market, and sell it at the same price as in ordinary years, the consequence would have been that the purchasers, buying as cheap as when there was no scarcity, would have used what they bought as freely. Whereas high prices partly correct the evil which occasions them. For they force the consumer to take especial care that little be wasted; and to be sparing of the food which he purchases at so dear a rate. And thus the provisions which would ordinarily be consumed by the nation in seven or eight months, may be made to last for ten. It appears that this was not understood by the parliament. But in a short time it was found, that every thing became dearer; that neither cattle nor poultry were brought to market; and that pigs could not be fatted for the lawful price, when corn and pulse had risen to 3*l.* the quarter. As for mutton, the wet weather, which had ruined the harvest, had destroyed whole flocks of sheep.

The following summer was so rainy, that reaping did not begin till September; and such
 1315. corn as had not been destroyed, was got in damaged. In the case of a scanty crop of corn, the avarice of corn-dealers is, in the end, beneficial to the people. For by purchasing the corn from the grower, to store it up till the prices become still higher, they do that which a benevolent and judi-

cious officer does for seamen, shipwrecked on a barren shore, who have saved but little provision. If every one ate as his appetite urged him, all would soon be consumed ; and then every one must perish. But the officer computes how many days must pass before they can hope for relief ; and divides their scanty store, accordingly, into such portions as he can continue to distribute whilst their necessity shall last ; though the very first day's pittance of each may be thereby reduced to a quantity scarcely sufficient to support life. But in Edward the Second's time there were no such corn-dealers. The whole produce of this second deficient harvest, was, therefore, immediately sold to the consumers ; and hence though prices, in consequence, fell a little at Michaelmas, they were higher than ever at Christmas. A parliament, which assembled at Lincoln, Jan. now repealed the imprudent law of the former 1316. year. But corn continued to rise rapidly, and was soon 6*l.* a quarter, or equal to the rent of 160 acres of arable land. The gallon of small beer also rose to 6*d.* and of strong beer to a shilling *.

The aldermen of London, uninstructed by the failure of the parliamentary attempt to keep down prices by law, commanded all brewers, within their jurisdiction, to abstain from asking quite half these prices for their beer ; and at the same time, more prudently, forbade the making of barley into malt, for the present. And the cries of the poor induced the king to write to his sheriffs, and bid them endeavour to enforce the same regulations throughout their respective counties. It would have required a hard heart to resist the cries of the poor ; unless Edward had been more clearly convinced, than we

* The severity of the famine will perhaps be best understood by considering the misery that would arise from having these necessaries raised within a few months to thirteen times their ordinary price. For it seems from another law, passed in this reign, that 9*s.* a quarter was reckoned a fair price for wheat, and somewhat less than a penny for the gallon of ale.

can suppose him, that his compliance with their entreaties would be injurious to them. For the unhappy peasantry were now perishing in countless numbers; many from actual starvation; more from an infectious disorder, occasioned by the unwholesome food to which they had been reduced. It was even reported that parents had slain their own offspring to satisfy the desperate cravings of hunger. It was more believed, that children, wandering from home had been stolen and eaten.

Nor were the poorest of the people alone driven to frightful extremities. Retainers accustomed to the plenty of some patron's table were driven out. For the nobility, and the lordly prelates, could no longer support a numerous train of followers. The persons thus dismissed, at such a time, to seek a livelihood, they knew not where, united and became bands of robbers. This again drove the gentry and yeomen to arms in self-defence; and miserable indeed was the case of those plunderers whom they overtook, and flung into prison. For when the king could scarcely procure a regular supply of bread for the royal household, who was likely to take care that the prisoner should be provided with food? The hardened jailor knew, but cared not, that the wretched men delivered into his custody, were torn to pieces and devoured, by the famished felons with whom he shut them up.

Amidst this misery Edward had still the folly to refuse purchasing peace with Scotland, on the easy condition of acknowledging Bruce to be, as he really was, its king. And Bruce, on the other hand, dissatisfied with all he had gained, unless he could force his enemy to own him what he was, incurred the guilt of adding still farther to the afflictions of a most afflicted people. The Scotch, at his command, crossed their borders to spoil, to burn, and to slay; reckoning there could be little danger in provoking the English, now that famine and disease

had deprived them of their wonted strength and courage. Another year the famine still prevailed ; and the northern counties had again a double share of the national calamities. Such was the terror produced by the devastations of the Scotch, that the bishop of Carlisle obtained leave, from the king and pope, to prepare a place of refuge for himself and his successors at Horncastle, in Lincolnshire ; as though he could not be safe unless he had the Humber between him and Scotland. On the other hand, the Northumbrian yeomen, turned desperate by their sufferings, made head against the Scotch, without waiting for the nobility to lead them. The invaders fled before these defenders of their country. But this self-formed army, having no authority to make their neighbours supply them with victuals, was tempted to collect food by force ; and there being no persons, whom the crowd respected, to maintain order among them, they quickly proceeded from one lawless deed to another. This brought to their camp every outcast robber, who could join them ; and entirely forgetting their first object, they took to pillaging the towns of their native county with as unsparing rapacity as the Scotch. Louis de Beaumont, and two cardinals, who were proceeding with much state to install him in his bishopric, fell into the hands of this host of robbers ; and the prior of Durham was obliged to employ the plate, as well as the treasure of his monastery, to redeem the captive bishop. This equally enraged the king and the pope ; and Gilbert Middleton, the leader of the party who seized the prelates, was taken by treachery, and hung. But so weak was the government, that four years passed before Northumberland was relieved from this terrible scourge.

More favourable seasons would have removed the famine. But in the north of England many ceased to sow, where *they knew* that foes would carry off

the produce. A murrain also fell upon the cattle; which, beginning in Essex, spread over great part of England; and was of so deadly a nature, that the dogs and cats are said to have fallen down and expired; after eating the flesh of such animals as died from it. This visitation terrified the herdsmen, who in their unhappy ignorance sought to soothe the anger of God, not by imploring forgiveness for their past sins, and help to amend their ways; but by quitting their peaceable occupations, to go and fight the enemies of Christ, as they said, in Judæa. With this mistaken object numbers of them reached the South of France; and there learning that Jerusalem was still far off, these poor deluded men took to murdering the Jews, whom they found in numbers about Thoulouse. For this some were executed by the French government, whilst others got back to England after a tedious captivity.

Famine; and pestilence; a plague among the cattle; an enemy on the borders of the country; and an army of robbers roaming within it, make up an awful list of afflictions. But to calamities beyond their controul, the king and nobles, unhumbled by all the past, added the miseries of civil war.

Edward Bruce had been defeated and slain in a great battle near Dundalk, and the English ascendancy in Ireland restored, by the bravery and activity of John de Bermyngham; whom the king of England rewarded with the earldom of Louth. Whilst the barbarity with which the Scotch desolated the north as far as York, leaving the ashes of smoking towns and villages, and the corpses of murdered women and children, to irritate the survivors, had roused the English people to rally round their sovereign in such numbers, and with such zeal, as enabled him to drive the invaders before him; and besiege the Scotch garrison in Berwick. But king Edward had now begun to affront his great nobility again, by displaying the same excessive par-

Oct. 5,
1318.

tiality for Hugh Despenser, an English gentleman appointed to be his chamberlain by the Lords Ordainers, as he had formerly shown to Gaveston. The earl of Lancaster, hearing that, if Berwick was recovered, Despenser was to be made its governor, withdrew from the king's camp with his numerous followers; by which the royal army was so weakened, that Edward could no longer hope to succeed. This, however, was happy for the nation, as it made him willing to listen to offers from the Scotch king, who was enough alarmed to propose a treaty, without insisting on having his title inserted. The result was a proclamation, informing the people of both countries, that a truce for two years had been agreed upon, between "Edward, king of England, and Sir Robert de Bruce and his adherents." Dec. 1,
1319.

The earl of Lancaster had lost much of his popularity, by withdrawing from the camp before Berwick. Yet the jealousy entertained against the court favourite, enabled him, soon after, to draw together forty barons and earls; who affixed their seals to a document, whereby they pledged themselves to unite, for procuring the banishment of Hugh Despenser and his aged father. June,
1321. A quarrel about an estate on the borders of Wales, which Despenser claimed for the crown, had particularly irritated the lords of the West; and after pillaging the castles and estates of the Despensers in Gloucestershire and the adjoining counties, and slaying many of the dependents of that family who endeavoured to protect their masters' property; the confederates arrived in London with an army powerful enough to force the king to submit to their dictates*.

* When the Despensers afterwards petitioned for redress, they declared themselves to have been robbed of 38,000 sheep, 3200 horned cattle, 2400 pigs, and 250 horses, besides large stores of wine, and salted provision. The laying up of winter food for cattle was so little attended to as yet, that it was diffi-

A parliament was then sitting at Westminster; before which the earl of Lancaster, and his friends, laid various charges against the favourite and his father. The accusations stated very sufficient ground for complaining of the excessive and undue influence which the king allowed them to have over his councils. But no particular acts were offered to be proved, against the Despensers, equally heinous with the violations of law committed by their accusers, in attacking private property as they had just done; killing persons guilty of no crime; and bringing up an army to overawe both the king and parliament. Indeed so conscious were the Lancastrians of the unlawfulness of their own proceedings that having obtained an act for the perpetual banishment of the Despensers, they thought it necessary to require that another should be passed, exempting themselves from all pains and penalties for such *felonies*, to use their own word, as they might be charged with having committed, in their prosecution of the Despensers. Nor did the king dare to refuse his assent to these acts; though he had, at first replied to their demands,—that the elder Despenser was abroad on his service, and the younger at sea—that it was contrary to the law of the land to condemn any, till they had an opportunity of answering their accusers,—and, that he himself would not violate the oath he took at his coronation, by granting letters of pardon to notorious offenders against the peace of the realm.

Oct. The king's objections were well suited to
1321. make the Lancastrian party odious. And an insult offered to the queen, who, being on her

cult. to keep them in winter, and impossible to fatten any cattle except whilst grass was plentiful. Hence the beef, mutton, and even the venison was all killed and salted before the autumn. The most luxurious households lived chiefly on salt food, including fish, during the rest of the year. Even in May the elder Despenser had in his larder 600 flitches of bacon, 80 carcasses of cured beef, and 600 of mutton.

way to Canterbury, was refused a night's lodging in Leed's Castle, gave him a plausible excuse for raising an army in his turn. The Despensers then joined him again; and the sentence against them was declared illegal by the prelates, assembled in convocation; because all the bishops present had protested against it at the time of its passing. The earl of Lancaster had also now exposed himself to general condemnation, and to the rigour of the law; by inviting the king of Scotland to invade England again, as his ally in the war he was determined to maintain. It presently became known, that in his correspondence with the Scotch, he had even taken the name of king Arthur; but, whether as proposing to reign over England by that name is not certain. The centre of the kingdom chiefly suffered from this civil war. But it soon came to an end; the earl of Lancaster being taken prisoner, and his party utterly routed, in a battle at Boroughbridge; where they in vain looked for help from the Scotch. It cannot be wondered that the king had him Mar.
1322. condemned, and beheaded, for his undeniable treason; but it is sad to think that ambition should thus break the ties of kindred. For the earl and his sovereign were almost each other's nearest relations.

Another parliament was now assembled at York, in which the king's partisans again predominated. The acts passed to the injury of the Despensers were here repealed, along with all the May. restrictions imposed on the king by the Lords Ordainers. It was also enacted, for the future benefit of the crown, that, henceforth, no ordinances made by subjects, acting under the authority of any commission whatsoever, should be of any force against the sovereign's rights. And that no laws should affect those rights; unless treated of, and assented to, by the king, the prelates, the barons, and the *commons of the realm*.

The truce with Scotland was now at an end. And the Scotch had again begun to cross the borders for spoil. The king, therefore, summoned every male between the ages of sixteen and sixty, in the northern counties, to aid him against them; and this order drew such an army around him, that the Scotch would not venture to meet him in the field; so that

Aug. he advanced, almost unresisted, as far as the Forth. But the Scotch had driven off their cattle; and the English army was so numerous that it could not subsist, on the little they left behind. Hence Edward soon found himself obliged to retire as rapidly as if he had been beaten. The Scotch hovered on his rear as he quitted their country and so alarmed him by a night attack, in which a small party had nearly penetrated to his tent, that he changed his retreat into a flight; and was pursued, by his indefatigable foes, to the gates of

Oct. York. In an age when successful bravery was held in far greater respect than either goodness or wisdom, and cowardice more abhorred than any sin, this humiliating conclusion of a campaign, which the king had begun at the head of an unusually large army, being the second instance of a similar failure on his part, made him more unpopular with his subjects, than years of misrule, or tyranny, would have done.

He was also so unhappy as to have made bitter enemies of two able and intriguing prelates, John Stratford, bishop of Winchester, and Adam Orleton, bishop of Hereford. Both had been Edward's agents at the papal court; and had there accepted from the pope, the appointment to their respective bishoprics; though Stratford knew the king intended Winchester for his chancellor, Baldock; and Orleton was actually commissioned to request the pope's interference, with the chapter of Hereford for Dr. Charleton. For thus repaying his confidence with treachery, the king had sharply rebuke

them; had remonstrated with the pope; and had expressed a resolution to prevent their taking possession of their sees. But after irritating them, by this opposition to their preferment, he had soon given way; and had since, with his usual imprudent easiness, restored them to favour, and trusted them with the management of his interests at foreign courts. But conscious of having wronged the king, the thoughts connected with him were painful to their minds. Orleton, who had behaved the worst, and been the most freely forgiven, must have felt his conscience smite him, at every renewed instance of his indulgent master's kindness; and as the *coals of fire* thus *heaped upon his head* found a heart too hard to be melted to repentance, they did but harden it; making him first abhor himself, and then his benefactor. He had been at the earl of Lancaster's ear, urging him on against his sovereign; and had supplied the king's enemies with arms. For this participation in the late rebellion, he was accused, before the parliament, of treason. But the king, whilst desirous to keep the bishops from joining Lancaster, had assented to laws, whereby he gave up much of that authority over the clergy, which Henry II. had struggled so hard to maintain*. By these recent laws persons in holy orders were declared exempt from the jurisdiction of laymen, in all matters concerning life and limb. This exemption Bishop Orleton, therefore, claimed. And when the judges would have compelled him to stand his trial before them, the archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Dublin, accompanied by ten bishops, entered the court, with their crosses borne on high, and led him away. He thus escaped being punished in his person. But the question, whether his temporalities were not forfeited, was carried before a Herefordshire jury; and, on their verdict, Edward took possession of the estates of his see.

* See Vol. I. p. 382.

The elder Despenser had now been made earl of Winchester; the younger was married to the king's niece; and their enemies seemed entirely subdued; so that their power might have been thought very firmly secured. Nor could the conclusion ^{May 30, 1323.} of a second truce with Scotland, for thirteen years, be otherwise regarded by the majority of the nation, than as very creditable to their administration. But this prosperity made the favourite more haughty than ever, which led to his exasperating the proud by insults, wherever he moved. Amongst others he exceedingly irritated the queen, by making her feel that her husband was very likely to pay but little attention to her requests, unless she would condescend to ask him to second them. Whilst the angry thoughts which this arrogance excited were rankling in her breast, other affronts followed, which she attributed to Despenser's desire of humbling her. Philip V. of France was succeeded by Charles IV. Both were brothers of queen Isabella; but the weakness of the English government tempted Charles to seek occasion of quarrel with king Edward; and the misbehaviour of one of the latter's officers in Guienne, was hastily seized by the French monarch as a pretext for invading that province. The king of England remonstrated against this, and engaged to correct any wrong committed by his subject; but hearing that the territories which had so long been held by his ancestors in France, were overrun by king Charles's forces; and being conscious of his inability to cope with the French power on the continent, he determined to make reprisals nearer home. Commissions were, therefore, issued by Edward, authorizing his admirals to seize all the French vessels they could ^{Sept. 1324.} find in the channel; and enjoining others to arrest the persons, and take possession of the estates of all Frenchmen residing in England. These orders extended to the seizure of priories

subject to French monasteries ; and they expressly included the natives of France in attendance upon the queen, amongst the persons to be arrested. This measure was quickly succeeded by a proclamation, stating, that whereas the king feared lest the castles belonging to the queen should be insufficiently guarded, he thereby commanded her officers to surrender up all the manors, parks, and fortified places, which he had previously bestowed upon her ; and from which she drew her income, and the means of maintaining her household *.

About this time bishop Orleton had become her adviser ; and she not only concealed her anger at these proceedings, though a woman of fierce passions ; but affected great zeal for the king's service. From this supposed zeal Edward thought he might derive advantage ; being persuaded by Stratford bishop of Winchester, in whom he still imprudently placed confidence, that Isabella would be able to induce her brother Charles IV. to desist from keeping possession of Guienne. The queen was accordingly sent to Paris ; that she might mediate between the two sovereigns of France and England. But no sooner had she arrived

March,
1325.

* It required a very large extent of landed property to supply any considerable expenditure, when the revenues, derived from estates, arose chiefly (see p. 80) out of fines. And the number of dependants who lived upon the great, in those days, made their household expences much higher in proportion than they are now. For such a crowd would be idle ; and, being idle, they would be dishonest as well as wasteful. That the earl of Lancaster's servants were both, can hardly be doubted ; for his steward's account, for the year 1313, contains a charge for 400 lbs. of tallow-candles, besides 1700 lbs. of wax and turpentine for torches. The consumption of wine in his family is put down at 369 pipes of red, and two of white in the same year. Altogether he expended that year 21,927*l.* in modern money ; nearly all of which went in eating, drinking, and cloaths. And this at a time when wine cost, as appears from the same account, rather less than 1*l.* 10*s.* a pipe in the same money. The expence of his stud and the servants' wages are thrown together under one head, and amount only to 942*l.* in the same.

there than she gathered round her such partizans of the Earl of Lancaster, as had either been banished, or fled across the seas. Among these was Roger Lord Mortimer of Wigmore, who having been taken prisoner at the battle of Boroughbridge, and confined in the Tower, had lately made his escape from thence. He thirsted, as eagerly as queen Isabella, to be revenged on the Despensers; and their participation in this malignant feeling became a bond of union between them. But *the way of the wicked seduceth them* to greater guilt. The purposes for which the queen and Lord Mortimer met, were hateful in the sight of God; and He gave them up to the evil imaginations of their own hearts. For a while, however, their wickedness was hid from men. King Edward's younger brother, the Earl of Kent, who had been sent to Paris, by him, on the same business as Isabella, thought she had acted a faithful part, in persuading Charles IV. to send over a promise of eventually restoring Guienne; provided the King of England would come to France, and perform homage for his continental inheritance. To this condition Edward assented; and ordered letters to be sent to all parts of his kingdom, by way of summoning those whom he wished to attend him abroad. The list of persons, thus especially invited to accompany their sovereign, and to grace his court in the presence of the greatest king in Europe, affords remarkable evidence how much he preferred the society of supple dependents, who would not venture to contradict a monarch, to that of the spirited English nobles, accustomed to let him hear their opinions, whether palatable or not. Excepting the earl of Leicester, whom it was dangerous to leave behind, being the brother and heir of the beheaded earl of Lancaster, the list, and it is a long one, is chiefly filled with such humble names, that John of Amwell, parson of West Rasen, occupies quite a conspicuous situation amongst them. Either

the fear of treachery, however, or a sudden attack of real illness, made Edward change his purpose, when he and his train had got in sight of Dover. And the Bishop of Winchester was, accordingly, commissioned to make his excuses to Aug. 24.
king Charles.

The artful devices of Edward's personal enemies had now begun, if not before, to guide the measures of the French court. A reply was speedily returned, stating that the king of England's son would be accepted to do homage instead of his father, provided the latter would make over to this young prince the duchy of Aquitaine. With this proposal the faithless bishop of Winchester urged the king to comply; and his advice was, in this instance, too agreeable to Despensers not to receive his warm support. For the favorite was well aware, that to accompany the king to Paris would be to put himself in the power of Isabella; whilst to stay in England without him would be to put himself at the mercy of the barons. To Edward himself the cession required seemed little more than the surrender of a name; inasmuch as his son, being but twelve years old, must continue, for at least some years longer, subject to his controul. He, therefore, formally yielded up the duchy Sep. 10.
without taking time to consult any persons but those around him; and the young Duke of Aquitaine, was sent off in haste to France.

But when the homage had been performed, and week after week passed away, without the Queen or Prince's preparing to return, the king of England began, too late, to suspect that he had been duped by false promises, craftily devised to draw from him, at once, the surrender of his French territories, and of his son and heir. This suspicion was painfully confirmed by a letter from the king of France, declaring that his sister Isabella was prevented from returning to *England*, by her fear of Hugh Despen-

ser's designs against her life. On receiving this notification, Edward wrote to the king of France, to the pope, to his queen, and his son, and to every person on the continent, whom he could think likely to be moved to interpose usefully in his favour. In his letter to the queen he appealed to her own conscience, whether the friendly terms on which she had lived with Despensers, up to the time of her departure, did not prove that she had really no such fears of him, as were now alleged; and whether he himself had ever behaved to her like a cruel, or a harsh husband? To his son, the king used the language of an affectionate parent; saying nothing that might lead the boy to think ill of his mother, but bidding him remember his promise, that he would remain no longer in France than was necessary; and charging him, as he valued a father's blessing, to hasten his return homeward. But the queen had strayed too far from the path of duty, to be easily won back. It was now notorious to all Paris, that she was leading, with Lord Mortimer, the life of an adulteress. Henceforward she hated her husband, because the thoughts of him were inseparably united with the stinging consciousness of her own guilt. To her son she affected to give free permission to return to his father if he would. But she persuaded the boy, that his departure would distract her with grief; and that Despensers was their common enemy. In the Earl of Kent, she seems to have found a prince of as weak understanding as the king, his brother; and ready, from jealousy of the favourite's influence, to join in any schemes for removing Despensers from about the king's person. The pope, however, was moved by Edward's just complaints, and remonstrated so strongly with the king of France, as to induce him to desire his sister would

July,
1326.

withdraw from Paris to Hainault, in Flanders; whither she and Lord Mortimer accordingly conducted the Duke of Aquitaine.

The wickedness of Isabella could not be hid from the Count of Hainault; and being a parent, he must have felt some natural horror, at observing a mother take advantage of her child's unsuspecting confidence in her affection, to seduce him into rebellion against his injured father. But when this artful woman put before the count the prospect of seeing his own daughter become Queen of England, his ambition made him give way to the temptation; and he consented to incur the guilt of abetting her iniquitous projects. Prince Edward was accordingly betrothed to Philippa of Hainault; and his father-in-law supplied Isabella, in return, with money, and 2000 armed horsemen, that she might be enabled to begin the war against her husband and sovereign forthwith. By his influence she was also provided with shipping; and being joined by the earl of Kent, and other disaffected Englishmen and exiles from France, the queen, still taking her son with her, set sail for the invasion of England, with so small an armament as might easily have been beat off by the fleet, which king Edward had prepared to guard the coast.

But the belief that their sovereign's wife and brother, could have no worse intentions towards him than the barons, who, earlier in his reign, put his first favourite to death; and the prevailing wish to see Despenser humbled, or even brought, like Gaveston, to the scaffold; prevented the king's officers from serving him with fidelity in this struggle. His fleet had been prudently ordered to watch the mouth of the Orwell; but it withdrew from its appointed station, as if purposely to avoid opposing Isabella and her partizans; who landed there a day or two after its departure. Sep. 24.

When this news reached the king, he issued a proclamation, offering 1000*l.* to whosoever should arrest Lord Mortimer, or bring in his head; the said *Lord Mortimer being already a convicted traitor.*

But whilst he commanded his subjects to take up arms against the invaders of their country, Edward strictly enjoined them to do no hurt to his wife, his son, or his brother; whom he delicately spoke of as only misled for awhile. A few days after, the king received intelligence, that Robert de Watteville, whom he had commissioned to array the men of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, against his enemies, had joined the queen, and placed his levies at her disposal. That his remaining brother, the Earl of Norfolk, had taken the same side; and that the primate Reynolds, was sending the queen money*.

Thus deserted and betrayed, the king could no longer trust any persons, but those whom he knew to be convinced that the Queen's success would be their ruin. He, therefore, left London for the west, where the Despensers had strongly fortified their castle at Caerphilly, and where his favourite's father, the Earl of Winchester, held the government of Bristol. The king's departure from London was immediately followed by an insurrection of the populace, who seized the loyal Bishop of Exeter, and pulling off his armour, put him to death. His priestly vestments would have been a safer dress. The armour the bishop wore had an air of defiance, that ill suited a minister of peace, and showed him prepared to act in the most direct opposition to his heavenly Master's commands†. The Londoners having displayed this hostile temper towards the king's friends, his opponents were at liberty to push on westward, in pursuit of him, without delay. But they began to perceive, that they had by no means all the same object. Most of the nobility, who had joined the queen since her landing, had done it under the belief, that she would gladly live with the king again, provided the Despensers, whom she and they hated alike, were permanently banished, or put

* See p. 128.

† See Matt. v. 38—40,

to death. But, when they found that she was no less an enemy to the king himself, than to the favourite, they thought her enmity unreasonable; and were disposed to insist on her acquiescing in a change, which should extend no farther, than to place the king under a strict control by parliament. Here, however, bishop Orleton came forward, and imposed upon the deliberating barons such exaggerated accounts of Edward's misbehaviour to her, and of her pretended conviction that her life would be in danger with him, that they were forced to regard a reconciliation as hopeless.

Whilst well meaning men were disposed to doubt, whether their sovereign had so misconducted himself, as could justify them in aiding the queen, after this discovery of her designs, she and her followers arrived at Oxford; and Orleton received her commands to preach before the University. He did so, and chose this text. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. She shall bruise thy head* *. It is unfit to call what followed, *a sermon*. But this unhappy sinner hesitated not to stand up in the house of God, and apply words which foretold the victory of the Holy Jesus over Satan and the wicked, to the purpose of winning his hearers to assist an adulteress in her rebellion. It was not a month since the king too had addressed both his Universities by letter, but in a dignified and Christian tone; setting before them a simple statement of the steps he had taken to avoid a war with France; attributing the queen's continuance abroad to the known hostile designs of the French king, rather than lay blame upon her; and entreating the members of the Universities to offer up "earnest and continued prayers to Almighty God, that He would be mercifully pleased to keep him, amidst the

* Gen. iii. 15. *She* is not the proper word; but the Bishop found it thus mistranslated in the Latin Bible used by the Romish priests.

storms of this world, in the way of his commandments, and to preserve the kingdom in safety." Whatever might be the effect of these different appeals on the University of Oxford, Bishop Orleton's harangue found but too suitable materials to work upon, in the hearts of the warlike barons who had joined, or accompanied Isabella. They marched on to Bristol, determined to show but little mercy to their opponents; and the Earl of Winchester soon
 Oct. 26. found himself unable to defend the town from their superior force. This unpopular nobleman had passed his ninetieth year; and his grey hairs would have been spared and respected, by men who had known how to respect themselves. But he was dragged before Sir William Trussel; an enemy whom his son's influence had banished from the country, till the queen brought him back in her train, and made him a judge. The Earl was charged by his accusers with various offences; but their accusations, in reality, amounted to no more than his having consented to all those measures which his son was supposed to have dictated to the king. Even these charges, however, were unsupported by any evidence. Yet Trussel condemned him to be carried out of court, and executed, with all that barbarity which the preceding reign had introduced into the sentence against traitors.

Having heard of the surrender of Bristol, and perceiving that the hearts of his subjects were entirely gone from him, the king wandered in the neighbourhood of Caerphilly, without daring to shut himself up within its massive walls. He soon, however, lost all hope of either resisting, or escaping from his ene-
 Nov. 23. mies; and surrendered himself to his cousin, the Earl of Lancaster*, into whose hands the younger Despenser had already fallen. And now the

* Henry, Earl of Leicester, had lately assumed the title of *Earl of Lancaster*, as heir to his brother, who was beheaded.

imphant party began to act with much more cruelty and contempt of the laws than the Despensers had ever been guilty of. The Earl of Arundel, John de Mowbray, and Thomas of Micheldever were beheaded, to satisfy the private enmity of Lord Mortimer; and Hugh Despenser was hung on a gibbet fifty feet high, and otherwise tortured; without being permitted to speak in his own defence. The execution of Des-
penser was not justifiable by any law; for though the parliament had banished him, as it did Gaveston before, under the penalty of being treated as a public enemy if he returned, this act had been expressly repealed by a succeeding parliament. But Isabella

was not to be restrained from wreaking her vengeance on those she hated, unless she could clearly perceive that it would set the whole body of the nobility against her, while she still needed their support. The fear of doing this prevented her from saving her husband's life, for the present. For the consideration which many of them had shewn to preserve the king's honour and authority, as far as could be done compatibly with taking sufficient precaution to prevent the state from suffering farther by his folly, convinced the queen that they still retained some attachment to a sovereign whose conduct, though bad, had been peculiarly gentle. Edward was, therefore, allowed to remain under the care of the Earl of Lancaster, to whom he had surrendered himself; and having yielded up his great seal to bishop Becketon, to be used by the queen's party as they thought proper, he was peaceably removed to Kenilworth Castle; there to reside till a parliament, summoned in his own name, should decide on the future government of the country.

This important parliament met at Westminster, the seventh of January, 1327; and the assembled members were immediately addressed by bishop Becketon. After saying many ill and untrue things of the king, he bade his hearers reflect, that to restore

him to power again, would be to expose the queen to certain death ; to whose wisdom and courage, he they owed their deliverance from the tyranny of the Despensers. Wherefore, he added, they would do well to retire for that day, and prepare themselves for deciding, after dinner, on the next, “ whether they would keep their present king, or preferring his son to reign over them.” At the appointed hour, the hall was filled with the shouts of the citizens clamouring for a new king. On this, Archbishop Reynolds, for whom Edward II. had procured the archbishopric, by interfering improperly, to the voices of the electors set aside, had the index to exclaim, “ The voice of the people is the voice of God *.” It was evident that a great majority both of the parliament and people, were desirous to beget a king, whose incapacity was notorious ; so that the Duke of Aquitaine, was proclaimed by the title of Edward III ; though the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Rochester, London, and Carlisle refused to join the other peers in immediately swearing fealty to him.

It was, however, felt necessary to proceed with more formality in transferring the royal authority, and accordingly, five days after, Stratford, Bishop of Winchester, brought forward a bill, charging Edward of Caernarvon with giving himself up to evil counsellors ; with losing Scotland and Gascony by his folly ; and with oppressing the Church and nobles. To these charges it was added, that his cruelty and the weakness of his character, allowed no hopes of his amendment. All this was decided to be so well known, as to need no proof ; when it was proposed and voted, that Edward himself should be crowned in his stead.

When this resolution was reported to the queen

* This strange maxim seems to have sprung up in the bosom of Romish ignorance, from the Latin translation of Isaiah l.

she hypocritically affected to be almost beside herself with grief; and unwilling to believe that the parliament could dethrone her husband. The prince may be supposed more sincere, in refusing to accept the crown without his father's consent. To remove these scruples, or rather to stop the mouths of any partizans of the deposed monarch, a deputation of nobles, prelates, and members of the commons, was sent to Kenilworth to see the king; and to obtain from him an acknowledgment of his submission to the will of parliament. The deputation was preceded by the bishops of Winchester and Lincoln, who artfully spoke to him of the greatness of mind he would display, and the reward he would deserve, by yielding up his rights to restore peace to his people. To such arguments they added the promise of a noble revenue during his life; and threats, if he should refuse. Having thus wrought upon Jan. 20. his mind, they led him forth, dressed in a plain black gown, to the chamber where the deputation was now waiting to hear his decision.

At the sight of bishop Orleton, who stood foremost, and advanced to address him, the king started back, and sunk to the ground in a swoon. It had given the fallen monarch a keener pang than the loss of his kingdom, to see the man, whom his patronage had raised from obscurity, now come to receive with grave solemnity, the submission of a kind master; and to gratify himself, by witnessing the low estate to which his bitter enmity had helped to reduce his benefactor. But Edward recovered, and listened to Orleton, who, resuming his speech, advised the king to bear his change of fortune patiently. It may be hoped that affliction was, already, working a more happy change upon the king, than it was ever permitted to do upon this hard-hearted prelate. For he meekly replied, that he sincerely lamented having given his subjects so many just grounds of complaint against himself; that he especially besought the par-

don of all present ; and that he thanked the parliament for taking his son, rather than another, to be their king. The next who stepped forth from the company was Sir William Trussel, the unjust judge, who had condemned the Despensers, unheard, to a cruel death. He now said aloud, "Hear all men, I, William Trussel, being proctor for the parliament and people of this realm, take back the homage formerly to you, Edward, done ; and deprive you, from henceforth, of all royal power and dignity ; never to be obeyed, as king, again." After this, Sir Thomas Blount, steward of the household, broke in pieces his staff of office, as usual at the funeral of a king ; and declared all persons, engaged for the late king's service, to be at liberty to depart.

Edward of Caernarvon might now have said, *Surely the bitterness of death is past !* But the queen and Lord Mortimer feared that, if treated so kindly as he was by the Earl of Lancaster, he might still live long ; and that, if he lived, the nation might yet pity him, and another parliament might recall what had past ; especially whenever it should become as well known in England as it had been in France, that Isabella's criminal passion, and not her pretended fear of Despenser, had made her refuse to return to her husband. The Earl of Lancaster was therefore, ordered to resign the custody of Edward to Sir John Maltravers ; who hurried him away from Kenilworth to Corfe, and thence to Bristol, and to Berkley Castle. His death was wished ; but to execute him publicly was more than his enemies dared to do. So they sought to ruin his health, or break his heart ; shutting him up in damp chambers, amidst foul air ; interrupting his sleep ; giving him bad, or insufficient food ; and making him ride uncovered in the cold and rain. In one of these journeys, his keepers resolved that he should be shaven, to prevent his being recognized, and rescued from them. For this purpose, they made him sit down

upon a hillock, whilst one went to fetch some water from a dirty ditch. "You had surely better use my tears," said the weeping king, "they are warm and clean."

- We know that *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit* *. And the lowly meekness with which Edward was enabled to bear the cruelty of the men in whose hands his wife, his brother, and his son had conspired, or consented, to place him, encourages the hope, that God had accepted his wish "to be kept amidst the storms of this world in the way of the divine commandments;" and was moulding his heart, by sorrow and humiliation, to that blessed temper, which might make him *meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light* †.

His more unhappy queen was given up to fall deeper into sin. She allowed the king, her son, but a third part of the domains belonging to the crown, keeping the rest for herself; and she had besides obtained grants from the treasury, by means of her interested partizans, to the amount of 67,000*l.* in modern money; an enormous sum in that age. But all this could not purchase for her a heart at ease. Reports, she knew, were spreading of her husband's cruel treatment, and of her adulterous life. And she trembled lest the nation should be speedily roused, by a fuller discovery of her wickedness, not only to pity the king, but to avenge him on the most guilty of his enemies. And when she reflected on these things, she knew not how to escape from the punishment, which seemed likely to fall on her for past sins; but by rushing into worse. Her husband's gaolers, therefore, had messages of rebuke sent to them from court, for suffering him to live so long. But still they received no warrant for putting him to death; nothing that they could produce, if tried

* Psalm xxxiv. 18.

† Col. i. 12.

for his murder, to screen them from the sentence, which the laws of men have pronounced against such offences. But they, who heed not the law of God, have nothing to save them from committing any crime to which they are tempted ; if they think they can hide it from human eyes.

At midnight piercing shrieks were heard to issue
Sep. 21. from Edward's chamber. And the next day the neighbouring gentry, and the sheriffs of Bristol, were summoned to Berkley Castle, to bear testimony that the late king of England was dead. As far as they could see, his corpse exhibited no marks of violence. But Lord Berkley was from home ; and two inferior persons, Thomas Gourney, and William Ocley, had been entrusted with the command of the castle. Terrified at their own crime, these men soon fled the country ; and later confessions made it known, that to conceal their guilt from men, the wretches had dared, before God, who seeth in secret, to add such horrible cruelty to murder, as must not be told.

Thus ended the earthly career of Edward of Caernarvon. It has been seen that his government was never conducted by the counsels of the wise. Yet it did not pass without advantage to the people of England. An over-ruling Providence had put it into the hearts of those, who were to be its instruments for good, to begin a custom, the good effects of which were not in the least foreseen by those who began it ; but have been among the most valuable blessings bestowed upon this favoured country.

When the first Norman sovereigns wished to assemble a parliament, it was done by summoning such prelates, high officers of state, and persons holding their lands under no superior but the king, as he thought fit to call together. And though in making his election from the latter class, the monarch would naturally fix on some from private grounds of preference ; yet such would be most constantly summoned, as were known to be able to bring the largest

train of followers, to execute whatever the king should induce his parliament to resolve upon. Those who held their estates on the condition of serving the king in their own persons, and yet found themselves passed over without a summons, considered the omission as exempting them from the necessity of attending parliament. But they might go, and take their seats among the barons summoned, if they chose. And whether they did so, or not, they were regarded as *the nobles* of the land; equally with those more powerful members of their class, who had received an especial summons. Rights, however, but rarely exercised, and not regularly entered upon any record, are easily lost. In these times, churchmen were almost the only persons who carefully recorded all privileges, once conceded to their order, as precedents whereon to establish future claims. Hence, and from the circumstance of the church property being constantly on the increase, the bishops never ceased to be reckoned a part of the parliament; and even such abbots, as had once been summoned by the king on any particular occasion, secured to their successors the right of sitting and voting among the peers of the realm. Whereas such barons, as had been frequently passed over without a summons, gradually lost their right to a seat in parliament; from their disuse of it, and from neglecting to record their claim to, what they thought, a burdensome privilege. It should also be observed, that the title of *baron* once extended to all lords of manors, or, in other words, to all freeholders; since every division of freehold property, at that time, became a manor, if let off to copyholders*. Hence the increase of their numbers, and the breaking up of the fortunes of several into small shares, conspired to diminish the importance of the lesser barons; many of whom could by no means bear the expence of attending

* See pp. 81, 82.

the parliament; which might be summoned to meet at Winchester, or at Durham, or in any other part of the kingdom, as suited the king's purpose. The consequence was, that in the reign of Henry III. the lesser barons had ceased to be *peers*, or equals in this respect, of the greater. But they were still considered, both at home and abroad, as *nobles*. When, therefore, towards the close of his reign, the lesser barons, or freeholders, were summoned to elect two of their number in each county, to attend parliament as their representatives, and the trading inhabitants of boroughs were invited to do the like, it might have been expected that the county members, still called *knights of the shires*, would sit with the rest of the nobility; and keep aloof from the burgesses*, whose name of *commoners* they would have thought it humiliating to share. The knights, accordingly, do appear to have voted with the greater barons, in several of Edward the First's parliaments†; but in the reign of Edward II. they began to quit the seats occupied by the nobles, and to join the humbler burgesses. The parties concerned in this change seem to have fallen into it from circumstances which influenced them at the moment; sometimes returning to the earlier arrangement; but uniting permanently, after a few years, with the citizens and burgesses, in what was thenceforward called the House of Commons.

It is probable that the knights had, at first, no higher, nor wiser motives for joining with their inferiors, than that of preferring the respectful deference which the citizens were willing to pay them, to the mortification which their pride had

* A burgess is properly a person free of a borough. But the members of parliament returned by a borough are also called burgesses; it being presumed that the freemen would elect their representatives out of their own body.

† See p. 97.

to undergo amongst the earls and greater barons who now regarded their presence as an intrusion. Or, perhaps, the freeholders may have observed that the commons were not kept sitting as many days as the lords; and may have driven their representatives, in consequence, to take their seats with the commoner, by refusing to pay them their wages for any longer time than the cities or boroughs paid their members. For the expence of attending parliament was felt as so great a burden to landed proprietors, whilst farming produce could rarely, or with difficulty, be turned into money, that the knights of the shires were considered as hired by their constituents at twelve shillings a day *, to obey the king's summons in their stead. And the representatives of towns received in like manner six shillings a day during the session, from the places for which they sat; with a further allowance for their journey to, and from parliament.

But whatever may have led to the separation of the lesser nobles from the greater, and their union with the burgesses, its advantageous consequences will best appear from taking a view of the difference which this single circumstance has had a principal share in producing, between the English and the neighbouring nations.

In France, the parliament was little more than a court of justice; bearing a nearer resemblance to what is called *the King's Bench*, than to our parliaments. About the time, however, of which we are speaking, the French kings occasionally called together the representatives of the three estates of the realm, that is, of the nobility, the clergy, and the cities; and the superior wealth of the cities of France must have tended to make their representatives more important, in such a national convention, than the English citizens and

* *In coin of the present time.*

burghesses could then have been in the English parliament. Yet the representatives of the lesser nobles in France, amongst whom the lawyers managed to get themselves included, refused to let their votes be counted with those of commoners, protesting that it would be an insufferable degradation. The French burghesses, being thus discountenanced by the more honoured classes, never rose into any repute with the government, and gradually ceased to be summoned to give their assent to any public measures. Whereas in England, the members for towns being joined by the lesser nobles, they formed together such a powerful body, that the king, and every other political party as well as he, soon found it necessary to have their good will. And the improvement in agriculture and in commerce, alike contributed to increase the importance of an assembly thus composed both of landed proprietors and of merchants.

But farther; it was at this time customary throughout almost all Europe, to regard every person as *a noble*, who was born of a father having no other profession than the sword, and able to provide himself with a suit of armour and a horse. This rank too was equally inherited by the younger and elder sons, and by their children after them. So it continues to be in Spain and Germany; and so it was in France, till the late revolution. And hence, in those countries, the nobles increased till they were no longer counted by hundreds, but by tens of thousands. In England alone the lesser nobles, having once joined the plain citizens, rapidly lost sight of their claims to a different rank; and the low soon began to reckon none as noblemen except the lords, or peers, of the upper house of parliament. Hence too the younger brothers of the great nobility, not being summoned to sit with

the peers, naturally fell into the same class with those whose ancestors had been much longer passed over without a summons.

When this change had become habitual, all able Englishmen, below the peerage, learned to be content with being called *gentlemen*. In process of time the same appellation was shared by the magistrates with whom the representatives of these families were associated in the house of commons; and it was then extended to every person whose talents, property, or education made him a valuable companion for them. Whilst, on the other hand, the appellation of *noble*, becoming thus confined, in England, to the heads of its chief families, was secured for the English nobility, in modern times, much more of the respect of the world, than is paid to the crowd of continental nobles. And yet our nobility have been less tempted than they to despise or oppress their inferiors. For a foreign noble is accustomed to regard all persons of an inferior rank as a separate race; whose fathers, out of mind, have crouched to his ancestors. And so far as he can manage to have the burdens of the state cast upon commoners, he appears to himself to have thus found a way of relieving all his own relations and descendants, for ever, from their portion of their weight. Whereas, the English gentleman's estimate of his own superiority over commoners, is checked by the reflection, that an titled family may, perhaps, be able to trace its origin to some personage of higher rank, and of greater consequence in the state, than himself. And any inclination on his part, to procure, or enact laws bearing hard on the other classes of society, is still more forcibly opposed by the reflection, that every burden, which he consents to lay upon them, must be borne by his brothers, by every one of his own sons, except the eldest, and their children after them.

Another effect of the very great difference between the number of nobles in the kingdom of continental Europe, and in England, has been more important than the above. Both there and here a nobleman is dishonoured in the eyes of the world, if he seeks his livelihood in any other way than by serving in the wars, by personal attendance on his sovereign, or by serving the nation in political capacity. These ways of obtaining maintenance are not reckoned dishonourable; and, in fact, whilst they do not oblige a man to submit to any but his superiors in rank, they are means of subjecting others to his control. Commerce and trade is regarded as degrading a nobleman, more than sin would. For honour depends on the praises of the worldly and the proud; who judge of conduct not by the word of God, but by its consistency with those habits which would make a man an acceptable associate. Now a person may, like Antony de Beck, be a profane swearer, and yet be thought a very agreeable companion; by those who have no such love of God as to be grieved to the heart, when his holy name is insulted. Whereas the habits of men who receive money as tradesmen do, not to spend it, but to employ it again forthwith in making more, are natural and in variance with those of a sumptuous noble, and a thoughtless lover of pleasure. And the persons who think that none can choose an inglorious occupation, or follow one, the professed object of which is gain, but from covetousness, have observed that the love of money obliges a covetous man to be meanly submissive to the lowest person whom he sees the hope of gaining by some profitable bargain. Despising, therefore, a seeming humility above all things, they regard trade as an occupation which a nobleman cannot follow, without casting off all claim to be honoured; and this opinion thus strongly fixed in the minds of so

portion of their associates, has become an established maxim with the whole body of the nobility.

On the continent of Europe this general prejudice has had most mischievous effects. For, there, the numerous descendants of younger brothers of noble houses, keeping their rank, yet inheriting with either very small fortunes, or none, and being withheld from improving their scanty means by commerce, have been obliged to seek a livelihood by servile attendance on their kings, and corrupting them with flattery; or by hunting after the favour of the more wealthy and powerful of their own class, to obtain those posts and employments which but a few, out of so many, can be provided. And, on the other hand, the nobles who governed the councils of these continental kings, being thus harassed to support a crowd of connections, unwilling to dig, but not ashamed to beg, prevailed on their sovereigns to exempt the landed estates of nobles from the taxes borne by their fellow subjects; and, at the same time, to make it a rule, that no desirable post in the army, the state, the law, and but few of those in the church, should be given to any except persons of noble birth.

Thus have the commoners in those countries been, at once, disproportionately taxed; and irritated by finding themselves shut out, as a despised people, from all the honors of the state, and from any share of those emoluments which they are compelled to supply. Whilst the far greater part of the nobility being still, from their excessive and continually increasing numbers, unable to find such employments as established custom would allow them to accept, have become vicious idlers, infecting the whole mass of their countrymen, by the evil example of their corrupt manners, exhibited in every town. Whereas in England, the peerage descending, with the chief part of the property, to the eldest son, our nobles

are peculiarly exempt from temptations, either to gratify the king improperly, or to court popularity by voting for measures which their honest judgment condemns. Such of them as have not fortunes sufficient to maintain them in a manner suitable to their rank, have every encouragement to fit themselves, by the careful cultivation of their minds, for filling, with advantage to the nation, those honourable posts which their conspicuous station places within their reach ; though this does not secure them from being obliged to give way to a commoner of superior qualifications. On the other hand, such noblemen as are too wealthy to be tempted to useful toil by any wants, find their personal character so much an object of general interest, that they cannot become notorious for frivolity, or vice, without sensibly diminishing their influence ; while they also find, that a reputation for integrity and prudence, as necessarily increases their power. And as it is not needful that any of the English nobility should turn to trade for a livelihood ; the prejudice which prevents their seeking to enrich themselves by it, becomes useful. For the consciousness, that the value of their estates must improve with the general prosperity, is quite sufficient to make them sincerely desirous to encourage the commerce of the country ; whilst it is particularly desirable that, as lawgivers, they should be deterred from pursuits which certainly do add strength to those temptations, whereby men are led to think the wealth of the nation more important than its character ; and the increase of riches than the discouragement of vice.

It is surely needless to say to whom our praises are due, for making the foolishness of pride, or a narrow sighted economy *, become the means of beginning an arrangement, that gradually brought about a change in the ranks of society, which would have been abhorred by those with whom it origi-

* See p. 161.

ated; but without which the popular part of the government might have sunk into disuse, or more probably would never have obtained its very desirable influence; which has saved the lower classes from much insult and oppression; has supplied the higher with motives suited to preserve them from many temptations to evil; and has thus been made instrumental to blessing our country with a nobility and gentry, less disposed to oppress their inferiors, more useful, active, and enlightened, and more virtuous than are to be found in any other nation.

CHAPTER IV.

Edward III.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>Popes.</i>	
	A.D.		A.D.
Louis IV.		John XXII.	
Charles IV.....	1347	Benedict XII.....	1334
		Clement VI	1342
<i>Kings of France.</i>		Innocent VI	1352
Charles IV.		Urban V	1362
Philip VI.....	1328	Gregory XI.	1370
John II.....	1350		
Charles V.....	1364	<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
<i>Kings of Scotland.</i>		Andronicus.	
Robert I.		Andronicus II.	1328
David II	1329	John Palæologus	1341
Robert II	1370	John Cantacuzene.....	1347
		John Palæologus	1355

As soon as Edward of Caernarvon had resigned the royal authority, the parliament appointed a council of regency to carry on the go-^{Jan. 29,}
vernment, till his son should be of age. 1327.

This council was composed of four prelates, in-

cluding bishops Orleton and Stratford; earls, amongst whom were those of Kent and York, brothers to the late king; and of the Earl of Percy and three other barons. Over the whole the Earl of Lancaster presided; and was entrusted with the care of the deposed monarch and the guardianship of his young sovereign. It is probable that so many honors and trusts had not been heaped upon him, had not the Earl of Mortimer regarded him as a man of a generous and easy disposition, whose rank and popularity would give popularity to the new government if he was nominally at its head; whilst his firmness would prevent his making a vigorous opposition, to any measures on which they two resolved. In the council itself, Orleton and Mortimer, now made treasurer, were ready to act as they should bid; and their abilities and cunning enabled them to lead the majority of their colleagues out of the council, the new chancellor, being the creature of her party, was ready to pre-empt any order which she might desire. No sooner, therefore, had the Earl of Lancaster presented in his simplicity, to let Edward II. under his mother's care, than Isabella foundress of the king, the council, and the king, thus, that she was enabled to take to herself a portion of the royal demesnes and treasures, sharing with Mortimer the greatest part of the property of the Despensers. And this irregularity, unacknowledged by parliament, put it in the power of these two companions to effect the death of her injured husband of England, by the Scotch, being furnished to their iniquity, from its providing an excuse for removing Edward III. to

those counties, where his father's sufferings would unavoidably become known to some, and might have reached his ears.

King Robert Bruce had viewed the late changes in England, as likely to afford him an opportunity for procuring more advantageous terms, than he had obtained with the existing truce. And this tempted him to violate it; on the plea that an agreement made between himself and Edward II., could not bind him to abstain from warring against that king's enemies. He, therefore, sent a large body of June 1.

men into England, under the Earl of Murray, and Lord Douglas. As this army was not intended to make conquests, but only to burn defenceless villages, and rob their inhabitants, every Scotchman it was mounted on a galloway; and encumbered with no other luggage than a pouch of oatmeal, and a bag to carry off whatever he might steal. Such an army could not keep the field against the powerful army of 40,000 men, which Lord Mortimer, having Edward III. with him, conducted into the northern counties. But the Scotch could change their quarters so easily, and move so much more rapidly, than a more regular force; and the inhabitants left in the miserable district near the borders were so few; that as narrow as our island becomes between Newcastle and Carlisle, the English army, and its well-mounted cavalry, sought the Scotch, for near a fortnight, in vain; though certain they could not be far off. At length the young king having proclaimed, that he would grant the honour of knighthood and 100*l.* a year, for life, to any man who would bring him intelligence where they might be found; the Scotch better informed of what was passing around them, July 31. liberated a prisoner in derision, to claim the reward; and to let Edward know they were, and had been for some time, but three leagues off. For a week more the English general endeavoured, or pretended to endeavour, in vain, to find an oppor-

tunity of bringing the Scotch to an engagement ; the two armies being, most of this time, in sight of each other ; but on opposite banks of the Wear. At length the Lord Douglas crossed that river, in the dark, with 200 men, and penetrated so far into the English camp, as to cut the cords of the king's tent with his own sword. This had the intended effect of making the English suppose a similar attack was intended the following night, when they heard the noise of troops moving. But the next day they found that Aug. 6. their enemies had indeed broken up from the ground they lately occupied ; having already gained a march on their way home to Scotland.

It seems as if Lord Mortimer had wished to let the king, and the English gentry, feel the vexation of being thus baffled, and harassed in a fruitless warfare ; that he might have their willing consent to a peace, in which it would not be difficult to insert terms favourable to his own views. He accordingly disbanded the army after the retreat of the Scotch. And before the following spring had sufficiently advanced for beginning another campaign, the young king's name was pledged to a treaty ; whereby Edward was made to acknowledge Robert Bruce, as Mar. 17, lawful sovereign of Scotland ;—to resign, for

1328. himself and his successors, all claim to a paramount authority over that kingdom ;—and to give his sister Jane in marriage to David Bruce, Robert's son and heir ;—whilst the king of Scotland, in return for these concessions, was to pay 20,000l. sterling into the English exchequer, in the course of the next three years.

This treaty was a very beneficial one for England. For all the points given up by it, were only such as would otherwise have continued to tempt the English kings to waste their subjects' blood, in wars having no other object but the gratification of pride. And yet, so dear is pride to the natural man, that when the queen and Lord Mortimer betrayed their

selfish design in making the treaty, by taking the first year's payment from Scotland for their own use; the English nation was less angry with them for this fraud, than for having given up the pretended right of their king, to call the Scotch sovereign his vassal.

In the mean while Philippa of Hainault was invited to England, and married to Edward III.; in whom Mortimer sought to encourage a taste for pomp and tournaments; that his mind, being taken up with idle amusements, might be diverted from affairs of state. But it is said, *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them* *; and the *fools* in the word of God, are the wicked. Mortimer's prosperity now began to tempt him on rapidly to his own destruction. It had been made a rule of the regency, that an earl, a bishop, and two barons, should daily see the king, and advise him of public matters; but lord Mortimer took upon himself to stop this. He next forbade the earl of Lancaster to attend a parliament, held at Salisbury; because that earl was accompanied, as Mortimer also was, by a number of armed followers. And when the earl had persuaded the king's uncles to make common cause with him, Mortimer began to lay waste his domains. This frightened the earls of Kent and Norfolk into deserting their cousin of Lancaster; and then he, too, made an hasty submission. But Mortimer was not content with thus breaking up the opposition of these weak princes. He employed ill men to ensnare the earl of Kent; whose conscience now smote him for the part he had acted against his gentle brother, Edward of Caernarvon. These spies made the simple earl believe that a friar, who dealt with a familiar spirit, had been told by him, that Edward II. was still alive. And they further persuaded him, that the

* *Prov. i. 32.*

pope had said, his curse should fall upon the earl of Kent, if he did not do his utmost to deliver his brother from prison. The earl, thus deceived, wrote a letter, pledging himself to join in an attempt to compel the existing government to surrender the royal authority again into the hands of his supposed living brother. This letter was straightway carried to Mortimer. And the earl of Kent was, accordingly, arrested; brought before a parliament, which few had dared to attend March 31, 1330. who would not act at the bidding of the party in power; and by it he was condemned to death.

Edward I. had set the earliest example of dragging powerful adversaries to the scaffold; instead of being content with depriving them of the means for combating his authority. And already two princes of his blood had fallen, in consequence, by the hand of the executioner; first his nephew, Thomas, earl of Lancaster; and now his son, the earl of Kent.

It may be hoped, that the young king had been kept entirely ignorant what horrible things his father was suffering, from the party whose public acts were done with the sanction of his name. We have seen how that party kept him, at the time, in a remote part of the country. And when there were no newspapers, to tell every body, who can read, what every public personage is doing; when an English and a Scotch army could be roaming about for ten days, within the county of Durham, without the one knowing where to find the other; a boy, whom few could approach without permission from the interested parties, might, possibly enough, be prevented from knowing the truth, as to any fact not passing exactly under his own eyes. But the arrest and execution of the earl of Kent took place within the verge of the court.

And the intention, of which the earl was convicted, was such as would necessarily have been laid aside, had but his prosecutors allowed him to satisfy himself, by the examination of credible witnesses, that the king's father was really dead. Edward III. was now no longer a mere boy, but an intelligent youth who could scarcely overlook this; and who must have perceived that the grounds stated did not afford a plausible excuse for putting to death an uncle who had heartily and faithfully joined him and his mother, at a time when, as he perhaps still believed, they stood in great need of his friendship.

But if the young king wished to save his kinsman, he seems to have had neither sufficient warmth of affection, nor sufficient horror of sin, to make him willing to encounter any danger, rather than suffer that he should be put to death. He was sensible that, under the pretence of doing him honour, Lord Mortimer had surrounded him with attendants, who were, in reality, so many spies, ready to inform that lord, if he should take any steps, visibly intended to get rid of his control. He, therefore, held his peace; till he should find an opportunity of opening his mind to some one in whose fidelity he might reasonably trust, and from whose courage and discretion he might look for valuable assistance. Such a person he found, ere long, in Lord Montacute, who told him enough to convince him, that it was his duty to call Mortimer to account for the past; but that the latter was too powerful to be stripped of his authority by a word. It so happened that a parliament was, at this time, summoned to meet at Nottingham. Thither queen Isabella repaired with her son, and her favourite, and they three took up their residence in the castle; whilst the nobles and prelates were lodged in the town and neighbourhood. Edward III. was now himself a father; Philippa having brought him a son, afterwards

much celebrated under the name of the Black Prince. Yet such complete authority did Isabella continue to assume over the king, that she ordered Sir William Eland, the governor, to bring the keys of the castle every night to her chamber ; where they were laid by her pillow. Lord Montacute however ventured to tell the governor, having first sworn him to secrecy, that it was the king's command that Mortimer should be arrested ; and that his aid was required to execute that command. To this Eland replied, that Mortimer's guard was too strong to admit of its being done openly, but that there was an underground passage leading into the castle from the western side of the rock, through which, though apparently blocked up by rubbish, he could admit an armed troop after dark. That afternoon, Lord Mortimer, whom guilt tormented with suspicions of danger, charged the king with being privy to some ill designs against him ; and declared himself dissatisfied with his answers. At midnight, Lord Montacute, at the head of a trusty band of associates, passed under the ramparts of the castle ; and found Sir William Eland ready to guide him from the vault, into which the secret passage opened. As they ascended the stair-case of the great tower, they were joined by the king, and they advanced in silence till they reached the room where Mortimer was, at that moment, in consultation with the bishop of Lincoln. The door of this apartment burst open with their blows ; and two of the favourite's guards, who still attempted to resist their entrance, were struck to the ground. The noise of this struggle awakened queen Isabella ; who, rushing from her bed in the adjoining chamber, exclaimed, " Sweet son, fair son, spare my gentle Mortimer." But her impassioned supplications served only to betray to Edward the certainty of his mother's shame. Lord Mortimer was given into Eland's custody. The next morning the king proclaimed, to the general

satisfaction of his subjects, that being now of age, he had taken the reins of government into his own hands; and that a new parliament should meet him, at Westminster, the following month. Oct. 20.

Before this parliament Lord Mortimer was charged with sundry grave offences, and especially with having caused the king's father to be put to death. All these charges were declared by the lords to be so notoriously true, that it was needless to examine witnesses in proof of them. He was accordingly voted guilty of treason, without being heard in his own defence; and condemned to be hung at Tyburn. Thus was the man who had taught parliament to sentence the Despensers unheard, himself cut off by the like procedure, in strict agreement with the threat of that warning voice, which says, *With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged* *. But though it was most just, that He who spake those words, and who is *Lord of lords*, should so order events, as to *return this man's mischief upon his own head* †; it was a gross violation both of English law and of all sound policy, on the part of the peers, to condemn an accused person without either examining witnesses, or suffering him to reply to his accusers. For nothing could be gained to justice by this violent course. And if the court before which a person is accused, may decide whether his guilt shall be taken for granted, or farther enquired into, what security can there be that such a court will never be so deceived, either by false reports or by the prejudices of its members, as to take for granted the guilt of a man, whom a patient investigation of his case would have proved to be innocent? Twenty-four years later, King Edward allowed the forfeiture of Lord Mortimer's honours and estates to be reversed; on the ground that his condemnation had been conducted illegally.

* Matt. vii. 2.

† Psalm vii. 16.

The inferior persons employed to murder the late king, had either fled the country before, or now made their escape. But orders were given for their being pursued, and arrested wherever they might be discovered. Gourney was seized in consequence at Burgos, in Spain. There he was examined in the presence of the magistrates of the place; and, having acknowledged his crime, he was sent home for punishment; but was slain before he could reach England, by the contrivance of some person in power, who dreaded having his own guilt discovered if the man should betray all he knew.

There was, however, another offender; the unhappy partner of Mortimer's worst crimes. Her punishment Edward felt it his duty to leave to heaven. But he took back those extensive estates of which his mother had seized possession; and, reducing her income to 3000*l.* obliged her to retire to the manor of Risings. There she continued to live for twenty-seven years; noticed at times with ceremonious respect by the king; but miserable from disappointed ambition; and yet never so blessed as to feel that *godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation**. Nor did her son teach her to whom to flee for refuge from the wrath due to her guilt. For though early wise, in the estimation of his contemporaries, so ignorant was he of spiritual things, that he sent her what he was told had been a joint of John the Baptist's finger, and a bit of a rib of St. Lawrence, set in silver; that by honouring what had better been buried in the earth, she might win an entrance into heaven.

This celebrated monarch, who only now really began to reign, very much resembled his grandfather in those qualities which fitted each for an active career; and tempted each to become the slave of ambition. The courage, and address, and abilities

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

for which Edward III. was admired, were unhappily not regarded by him as talents to be employed in the service of that *King of kings* who gave them. And, therefore, they proved calamitous to himself. For they added strength to those snares which so beset the great, as to leave scarcely a hope that any could be saved, were it not that *things which are impossible with men are possible with God* *. But these gifts were, still, not lost to the merciful purposes of the all-wise Giver. By their exercise Edward restored to the royal authority that firmness, without which it cannot be beneficial. By their abuse, he became involved in struggles for foreign conquests ; which made him willing to correct many of the grievances that pressed upon his subjects, and to grant them numerous privileges ; as the only means of obtaining from the English abundant supplies, and hearty assistance, in return.

For a little while, indeed scarcely three years, he ruled the country with wisdom beyond his age ; like one who valued peace, and sought to prepare his subjects for its enjoyments. During this happy interval, he did homage to Philip VI. for Guienne and Ponthieu ; he made an effort to moderate the violence of contending parties in Ireland ; forbade tournaments amongst the English nobles, and the wearing of arms in the streets of London ; and fixed the useful office of *justice of the peace* † on a regular and permanent footing. Whilst, to encourage the peaceable pursuits of learning, he not only generously maintained a number of scholars, at his own expence, in the University of Cambridge ; but wisely provided for their being examined, at proper intervals, both as to their progress and their means ; that, as he said in his official letter, the idle might be struck off from his list, to make way for more

* Luke xviii. 24. 27.

† See p. 84.

hopeful students ; and those who could do without his assistance, for such as needed it.

But events passing in Scotland, soon tempted the king to forsake the paths of peace and of justice, for the pursuits of ambition.

Robert Bruce being dead, had left his successor David under age ; and Edward Baliol, the son of his old rival, thought the opportunity favourable for asserting, again, the claims of his own family. Baliol, however, would have been unable to raise an army, had not David's guardian irritated several English noblemen, by craftily taking advantage of the late disputes in England, to deprive them of the estates which they happened to inherit within the Scottish borders. These lords were ready, therefore, to make common cause with Baliol, for the recovery of their several claims. By their help, he found himself at the head of 3000 men ; with whom he sailed from Spurn, to attempt the conquest of Scotland. As gunpowder, though invented a little before this time, had not yet become a regular part of the ammunition of war, the result of battles still mainly depended on the personal prowess of the combatants ; and a whole crowd of peasants, who had followed their lords into battle with no arms but offensive ones, and those, often, only wooden swords or clubs, were no match for a single mounted knight whose horse and himself were encased in steel armour. It was the want of a proportionate number of gentry, rich enough to fit themselves out in this costly manner, which had made it impossible for the Scotch armies to bear the onset of the English except when their commander had the skill, as at Bannockburn, to make the impetuous chivalry of England unserviceable, before it could come to blows. Hence Baliol's small force, being chiefly composed of gentlemen and knights adventurers, obtained a victory, whenever the armies of Scotland

though more than ten times as numerous, ventured to meet it in the field. One would willingly hope the barbarous boast of his English allies, that in one combat they slaughtered, or otherwise caused the death of above 16,000 Scotch, must have been untrue. But it is certain that, in seven weeks, Baliol had so far got the upper hand of his opponents, as to be crowned king of Scotland at ^{Sept. 21,} Scone. ^{1332.} Notwithstanding, however, his having defeated all those who were foremost in resisting him, it was impossible for him to take possession of a hostile country, without the support of a much more numerous body of men than he had brought into it; and when success tempted his companions in arms to separate, he was soon com- ^{Dec. 16.} pelled to flee for his life into England. But, whilst successful, Baliol's consciousness of his insecurity, had led him to make king Edward tempting offers; and he had executed enough to induce that ambitious young monarch to hope, that by aiding Baliol he should obtain such a command over Scotland, as his grandfather had aimed at in vain.

In the following year, therefore, Edward summoned all the vassals of his crown to meet him in the north; and made some irregularities, committed on the borders, his excuse for violating the still existing treaty with Bruce, and invading the territories of the unoffending boy to whom his sister Jane had now been married.

The bravery with which the Scotch anticipated this formidable invasion, was but more destructive to themselves than their first resistance to Baliol had been. In the battle of Halidon hill, the lowest statement makes their loss to ^{July 19,} have been above 25,000 men. ^{1333.} King David's guardian, Sir Archibald Douglas, was amongst the slain; and as no second army could be raised to cope with the invaders, his friends thought it best to send *him and his English queen* to France, for

protection. For a while Baliol was, in consequence, no longer resisted. He took possession, therefore, of the vacant throne; formally acknowledged the king of England's right to a paramount authority over all Scotland; and gave up to him the most valuable part of the Scottish Lowlands; being no less than the whole of the country to the east of a line drawn from Dumfries to Linlithgow.

This success only exposed the English monarch to listen with the more readiness to another temptation; suggested to him by a foreigner, whom he ought not to have admitted to converse with him. The person meant was Robert of Artois; whom the ministers of Philip VI. had detected in a forgery, and had banished from the French territories. To revenge himself for this he attempted to have Philip assassinated. Failing in that, he came to the English court; and told Edward that, as the representative of his mother Isabella, he had a better right than Philip to the crown of France; and persuaded him, that he might obtain such assistance, to enforce his claim, as would ensure his either winning that kingdom, or becoming master of so large a portion of it, as would make him the most powerful sovereign in Europe.

If Edward was really convinced that he might justly claim the inheritance of the crown of France, it is a remarkable instance of the power of sinful desires over the mind, in making it blind to reason. The French had, some time before, declared it to be a fundamental rule of their monarchy, that the crown should not descend to females. This rule went by the name of the Salic law; from a notion that it originated in a distant age, amongst those German tribes who conquered Gaul. Now the three sons of Philip IV. had each died, leaving only daughters; and the elder brother had, accordingly, been succeeded by his younger, till the death of the last of the three; when the crown reverted to a nephew of

Philip IV., by his brother Charles of Valois. This nephew was Philip VI.; whom Edward had not only acknowledged; as lawful king, by doing him homage for Guienne; but had solemnly pledged himself to be his faithful subject, in all disputes within the kingdom of France. Now, however, he thought fit to pretend that the French nation, its king, people, and nobles, had no right to regulate the succession of their own kingdom, by rules different from those ordinarily observed elsewhere. But even if this had been granted, Edward was not the next heir. For if daughters were to be regarded as having such a right, to inherit after the sons, that no law could cut off their claims; then Joan, queen of Navarre, daughter of Louis X., had an indisputable claim to be preferred before Isabella, or that aunt's son.

They who believe our Saviour's words, that *one sparrow shall not fall to the ground** without His all-seeing Father's permission, must feel it impossible to believe, that the destruction of human life, which king Edward's pretensions were to occasion, was not brought about by His will who rules the earth. The Scriptures tell us, *that the Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil†*. And that *day of evil* the Lord would now no longer delay bringing upon France. Wherefore the wickedness of Robert of Artois was made to be successful, in tempting the king to *the sin that did most easily beset him*; that he might become the scourge of that country.

It must not, however, be supposed that either the guilt of those times, or its punishment, was confined to France. The prophet of old had pleaded for the Jewish church, saying, *O Lord, we are called by thy name, forsake us not‡*. But he was answered by the Lord, that, because the preachers preached

* Matt. x. 29.

† Prov. xvi. 4.

‡ Jer. xiv. 9.

falsehood in His name, and because the people *loved to wander, and refrained not their feet* from following such evil shepherds, therefore God had said, *I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence**. In like manner were the people of Europe now *called by the name* of Christ; yet every church was filled with graven images of the Virgin Mary and of saints, real or false, to which the people bowed down and worshipped. And though, here or there, some pious priest might be found listening, as Jeremiah did, to the word of the Lord, the most part preached to the people, as in his days, nothing but *false visions, and divination, and things of nought, and the deceit of their heart*†. It was, therefore, most fitting that the like sentence should fall upon the degenerate Christian Church; afflicting or destroying the hardened sinner, in wrath; but leading others, in mercy by worldly sorrows, to consider how they had offended; and to search the neglected Scriptures for the good tidings of reconciliation. The curse of famine had already visited England with awful severity; and of the other afflictions, it had tasted more or less‡. On France, whose soil had been foully stained with the blood of the saints§, the fury of the sword was now to be let loose; and king Edward was suffered to incur the guilt of being its relentless executioner. Whilst the pestilence was approaching from a distant land, to do the will of the rebellious world's offended King, throughout a wider range.

To begin a war for the conquest of France, Edward felt it necessary to strengthen himself by foreign alliances; and, as he meditated invading Philip's territories through Flanders, he would have bribed the reigning earl of that country to join his

* Jer. xiv. 10. 12.

† Ibid. 14.

‡ See pp. 133. 138.

§ See Vol. I. pp. 369. 468. and 473. Vol. II. p. 48.

erty; but the earl rejected his offers. Now the inhabitants of the great trading towns of Flanders are more prosperous than any other people in these parts of Europe; and their riches had so corrupted them, that, being much given to drunkenness, a brewer had risen to be the most important personage in the country. The man's name was Jacob Artveldt, and he dwelt at Ghent; where his nose and purse were at the service of all who would serve him without scruple. Such a character was always popular; but, to add to his consequence, he maintained above sixty valets, to attend him in his carriages when he rode through the streets of the town; and the citizens believed these men to be capable of murdering any one who should incur the brewer's hatred. Hence, whilst some followed Artveldt for his gifts, or to be invited to his feasts; and others to be assisted in their different projects by his influence; he was obeyed by the peaceable from fear. Thus had he, at length, become so powerful, that, finding his trade would no longer support him in his extravagant way of life, he boldly seized the public revenues of the Earl of Flanders for his own use. This brewer's favour the king of England condescended to court; so the Bishop of Lincoln waited upon Artveldt, and persuaded him to engage that the wealthy Flemish towns should aid the king against Philip, in despite of the wishes of their earl. The prelate who had undertaken the unchristian office, of encouraging this bad man to go on in rebellion, was farther commissioned to traffic with all the princes on that side of France; and bribe them if he could, to join Edward in his attack on a sovereign, of whom it was not pretended that he either had injured, or was likely to injure them, if left at peace: and as the sums which the king was willing to pay were large, he succeeded in purchasing promises of assistance from the Emperor of Germany, the Prince Archbishop of Cologne, the Dukes of

Brabant * and Gueldres, and some other independent nobles of the empire.

The money thus ill spent, had much of it been imprudently given to Edward by his English subjects, whose pride was gratified with the thought of seeing their king become master of France; and who had, therefore, consented to grant him half the wool in the kingdom; which they estimated at 20,000 sacks, saleable abroad at about 21*l.* 10*s.* the sack †. But, besides this gift from his subjects, the king ordered all the tin in Cornwall and Devon to be delivered up by the owners to his officers; on promise of repayment within two years. He also took possession of every thing belonging to foreign monasteries; and obliged many of the English abbots to lend him their plate: whilst he actually seized all the property of the Lombard bankers in London, under the pretence of punishing them for their usury. It is pleasing to find that this unrighteous eagerness to get money together, by every means he could devise, led the king to another measure, which, while it could bring him but little, must have gladdened the hearts of the oppressed: amongst the records of his transactions with noble and royal personages, there has been preserved a certificate, probably one out of many, of his granting freedom to two slaves of Saxon name, John Simondson and William Godwyn, of Esington, for sums paid by them to certain commissioners authorized to effect such bargains with the king's *natives*, as they are called.

* The accounts of prices and of expences connected with these wars, will be given in modern money of the same weight. And the present this duke received from the king, so estimated, was no less than 180,000*l.*

† A sack was to weigh 26 stone of 14*lb.* The king afterwards endeavoured to get the home prices raised by law thirty per cent.; so as to make 28*l.* the legal price for Shropshire wool; 26*l.* for Oxford and Staffordshire; 24*l.* for Leicester, Gloucestershire, and Herefordshire; and so on down to 8*l.* which was to be the price of a sack of the lowest valued, or Cornish wool.

Having made these great preparations, the king set sail from the Orwell, with a fleet of 700 sail, chiefly merchantmen impressed for the service, and having on board 31,000 soldiers, and 16,000 mariners. But when he had conveyed this army into Flanders, he found that his subsidies had only purchased empty promises; as none of the German confederates were prepared, or willing, to march into France. Edward was, therefore, obliged to leave his troops, for above a year, unemployed on the continent, at the expence of 765*l.* a day; whilst he returned to solicit farther aid from England, and bid yet higher for foreign help.

At home, however, though his people were still willing, it was not easy to raise any large sum so soon again. For the exportation of such a quantity of treasure had so emptied England of money, that commodities would no longer bring the same prices as before. The quarter of wheat would now fetch but six shillings, and a fat ox no more than one pound. Yet parliament granted him the twentieth, and the clergy gave the tenth, of their goods. Besides which, the king was allowed to purchase all the wool in the kingdom at a price below its market value. And the great landed proprietors, bound to serve the king in his wars, were subjected to a levy, according to their supposed means, of from 300*l.* to 600*l.* each. But an English merchant, resident at Antwerp, William de la Pole, came forward to his sovereign's assistance in a more splendid manner than any one else; lending him 33,000*l.* and becoming answerable for him to the amount of 22,500*l.* more. For this service Edward made him chief officer of his exchequer, and gave him the lordship of Holderness. How agreeable to the king this loan must have been, may be imagined from his soon after pawning Queen Philippa's jewels, and his royal crown, to foreigners. So needy are the ambitious.

But Edward did not content himself with making

these exertions for raising money to bring his mercenary allies into the field. He also visited the Emperor of Germany, and obtained from him the title of Imperial Vicar, or Deputy, that he might have the right of commanding the German princes. But still they were not ready for action till September. And then the counts of Hainault and Namur refused to move beyond the ancient borders of Germany; to the other side of which, they said, his authority as Vicar could not extend. Others, however, were willing to go with him somewhat farther. And when he had entered France the war began with all its horrors. For we learn, not from Edward's enemies, but from his own public letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, that as he advanced, he destroyed all the villages for miles around his camp, burning the houses and the corn, and slaughtering all kinds of cattle. This was quite as foolish as it was wicked. The immediate consequences were, that Philip bringing up an army in his front, and thus obliging him to call in his foragers, yet refusing to give him battle, the Germans and Flemings soon let the King of England know that they had no provisions left; and that they could not remain in what was become a desert. Nor was it more practicable for him to advance; though Philip began to retire upon Paris. For he had kept the allied army at bay long enough to give his own subjects time to carry off all their cattle and corn into the interior; which Edward's ferocious method of warfare had convinced them was the only way of escaping from utter ruin and starvation. Finding, therefore, that the country was a desert before as well as around him; and having been already detained till the food in his camp was consumed; the King of England was again obliged to let his army disband itself. And when he had thus closed a campaign which had cost him so dear, and had involved him so deeply in the guilt of oppressing

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 that several of the Flemish towns had bound
 elves, before the Pope, to pay a heavy fine
 ie hands of the king of France, if they should
 rebel against their Earl. Artveldt, there-
 observing that this engagement made them
 from joining Edward, in defiance of the Earl,
 ted to them and to the King, that if he would
 e take upon him the title of King of France,
 pretended due by inheritance, they might
 incur the penalty, and yet satisfy their obliga-
 without expence; inasmuch as the bond did not
 to what King of France the fine was to be
 and Edward could sign acquittances with that
 in their favour, if he assumed it. The sugges-
 atified the King of England; who ac-
 gly styled himself, henceforward, also Feb. 8.
1340.
 of France; and began to quarter the
 h fleur-de-lis with the lions in his arms. Not
 lo they remain to this day, on many of our
 buildings, as a lasting testimony of his unjust
 on; but so slow are nations, as well as indivi-
 in consenting to forego whatever gratifies
 pride, the most obstinate of foolish passions;
 hough ages have passed away since either the

king or people could have any thought of a vain title realized, even a quarter session held from Edward III.'s reign to the year 1800, without proclaiming that the sovereign of England was also king of France. And even late Majesty George III. gave discontent by his manly order for putting an end to what every countryman knew to be a false and idle boast.

It was probably, however, owing to the admiration for bravery, which so entirely overrode the sense of justice, in this chivalrous age, that his English subjects now consented to pay toward have the ninth fleece, lamb, and sheaf for two next years; a duty of six pounds on every hundred of wool, every last of leather, and every hundred sheep skins; the ninth part of all goods and chattels, in cities and boroughs; and the fifth part of all other people's goods. Parliament also added to it to subject foreign merchants to this last-mentioned charge; but, considerately and mercifully, exempted from it all persons living by the labour of their hands. The levying of this property-tax was strictly conducted, that, after leaving out the necessary expenses, it was expressly exempt from such taxation *, nothing too insignificant for the king's notice †. It can scarcely have escaped the

* See p. 11.

† Thus in assessing the property of a tradesman or farmer, there was an account taken of a silver clasp, value 6d.; a ring, 3s.; a suit of clothes, 1l. 10s.; a towel, 1s. 6d.; a pound of wool, faggots, and other items. The total amounted to 9l. 10s. out of which, therefore, he was to pay 1l. 1s. 1½d.

The value of implements of husbandry, at no date from the above, appears in a book of farm accounts where the articles are entered in such strange kind of Latin as follows. *Pro uno cartsadel, uno colero, cum uno promptis xivd. Pro factura de drangere iiid. Pro uno empto xivd.; Et pro sarratione, et dolatione, uni vid.* These prices, however, should be multiplied by three, if those of the tradesmen's goods have been, to obtain the present sums in modern money of the same weight.

vation, that the grant made by parliament was to imply that corn and sheep were the only of a farmer's stock worth taxing. And this appears from the manner of collecting the same; in levying which it was assumed that the value of the whole produce of the ground would not be more than the ninth fleece, lamb, and sheaf. At a careful account having been taken of the value of every benefice, by order of Edward I. in 1290, that he might get the full value of the portion of it which Pope Nicholas had given the king now bade his commissioners demand, of each parish, what its rector's income was stated in that account: after deducting so much as he might receive from his parish, independent of the same. Nor does this manner of estimating the value of the ninth fleece, &c. seem to have been at all unreasonable; though the king's commissioners, being country gentlemen, were not very apt to insist that their neighbours should pay by it *.

The conclusion which might have been hazarded from these circumstances, as to the state of agriculture is borne out by other facts. Cultivation was negligently conducted, and manure still so little brought into use, that from nine to ten bushels of wheat an acre was a full average crop. And the device the farmers had, for preventing the produce from falling away much below this, was to give

as the Abbot of Sherbourn, John Wake, and their two colleagues, summoned before them the occupiers of land in Haselbury, and demanded from them 13*l.* as the sum at which the rector's income had been valued, in 1290. In reply to this the parishioners acknowledged that such was the reputed value of the benefice; but they made oath, that the ninth fleece, and sheaf, were not worth more than 8*l.* 19*s.* And though they could not make out a claim for deducting from king Edward's valuation more than 1*l.* 13*s.*, as arising out of other commodities, rents, and offerings, the commissioners were obliged to rate the ninth at the value set upon them by the parishioners.

the ground long and frequent fallows. The method of farming was natural for cultivators with no money to lay out; particularly whilst there was very little competition for land. For by a large proportion of their farms arable, they raised what corn they wanted, with little expence than that of ploughing and shearing it accordingly appears from old surveys that in many parishes there were thirty acres of one of meadow; exclusive of the common. Hence, little or no hay was made; and, wool and cheese were commodities scarcely in the market, it was neither practicable, nor profitable for persons to keep many horned cattle, except those who wanted large carcasses to feed their retainers and visitors. On the other hand, a large range of open pastures suited sheep; the produce such, that the farmers, family, and servants could consume it without waste; and the wool was useful for clothing, found ready purchasers at all times, from the manufacturing towns of the north. The wealth and importance which those towns derived from their woollen trade, seems to have attracted the king's attention when he visited Hainault, with his mother Isabella; for, from that time he began to govern, he took great pains to establish the like manufactures within his dominions; inviting the Flemish workmen over to this country; protecting them from the jealousy and insults of the Englishmen; allowing them stipends, till their houses were set up; and procuring a law to be passed, that no of his subjects should wear any woollen clothing out of England.

But though anxious to encourage commerce, he was also a means of making his own revenue more

* At Hawstead, Suffolk, for example, in the time of Henry II. there were 1350 acres of arable land, and only 45 of

ard III. injured it very seriously, by authorising admirals to press all merchant vessels into his service, whenever he had occasion for any considerable number of shipping.

Edward was with 260 sail of vessels, chiefly got together in this manner, that Edward left the mouth of the Humber to encounter the French navy; by which Southampton had been burnt, and which was now fled off the coast of Flanders, to intercept his passage to the continent. The French were not sufficiently a commercial people to be able to man a fleet with their own sailors; but king Philip engaged the merchants of Genoa to supply him with a body of mariners, under the command of his countryman Barbavara; and he had gotten together as many as 400 sail, of which 140 were armed large ships. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose, that the biggest of these men-of-war was any thing near the size of a large merchant-ship in modern times. If these 400 sail had on board 40,000 men, which is the highest number mentioned by any historian, that would be only one man armed for each ship. And these were for the most part landsmen; on whose bravery the event of the battle was expected entirely to depend. Indeed, the French were completely were sailors regarded as no better machines for working the vessels, that the English commander, Pierre Bahuchet, Philip's treasurer, refused to listen to Barbavara's advice; who, an experienced seaman, would have disposed the French as to make the most of its numerical superiority over the English. Instead of wishing for the fleet to be stationary, and so near each other, that the vessels might be fastened together with chains, and so many towers along a fortified wall. Hence, when the first part of king Edward's fleet appeared off Sluys in the evening, the French admiral gladly took advantage of the night to arrange his vessels in close

order between two sand banks. Now the knighthood and warlike nobility of those days, had a great dislike to a service in which they must fight without horses; might find their armour a dangerous incumbrance; and could do little more than the common men. Although, therefore, there were not many sailors among the 40,000 men in the French fleet, there were among them still fewer of experienced combatants, trained from their youth to arms, whose valour and skill could have turned the day in a field of battle; whereas Edward's army contained a number of distinguished warriors turning with him at the head of a reinforcement to his army in Flanders. So that, when the French commanders had made it necessary, by their arrangements, that the combat should resemble an ordinary personal struggle of a battle, in that respect by land, they had given the king of England a very important advantage.

June 24. He began his attack the next day, at noon; and as his ships drew near their adversaries, the English bowmen shot such a shower of arrows, that the decks of the French vessels were already thinned before his knights could get aboard them. The first line of the enemy's army was then overpowered by Edward's numerous *at arms*; as those who fought encased in armour were called. And by the time this was done, terror had seized the second line, that a regular resistance was scarcely any longer thought of. Indeed, the carnage taking place amongst their countrymen in the first line, might well unman those who saw it approaching them. For as the sea-service was thought a vulgar occupation, it was held beneath a knight to think of the ransom which low-bred persons, as were found on ship-board, could give; and vain to hope for honour from prohibiting any generosity towards them. Hence the thirst of blood, which chivalry excited, rag-

combats quite unchecked. Weariness of arms prevented the victorious English from murdering every foe, who did not leap overboard to drown; rather than be cut to pieces by an enemy whose ferocity was not to be softened by sub-

When darkness put an end to the combat, the English had lost 4000 men. But 30,000 of their warriors had perished, and the whole French army had fallen into Edward's hands, except a few with which Barbavara had put out to sea. Barbavara had surrendered, and might have expected that his rank would secure him the same treatment he had been taken captive in a combat by land. King Edward gave proof of his own full confidence in the atrocious manner in which his subjects behaved, during the heat of the contest; by ordering the French commander to be hung, together, from the yard-arm of his ship. In that *when the dead, small and great, shall stand before thee; and the sea shall give up the dead which it hid**; how will this unhappy monarch tremble, at the vision of the 30,000 men, over whose destruction he rejoiced at Sluys!

The campaign which followed occasioned the same misery in France, and the same waste of money as the last; and it also equally failed in accomplishing the King of England's views. On perceiving that it was the prudent intention of his adversary to let him wear out his resources in this manner, Edward endeavoured to put King Philip off his guard by provoking him to anger. For this purpose he sent him a letter, beginning thus, July 26.
Philip of Valois, it is now a long time that we have been taking sundry different measures to induce you to give up to us the kingdom of France, your lawful heritage." The letter then challenges

* *Rev. xx. 12, 13.*

him to let the dispute be decided by a combat between them, "that the country and people might not be ruined, nor any more blood shed in their quarrel; evils which every Christian, and more especially princes or persons reckoning themselves governors of the people, ought anxiously to avoid."

The hypocrisy of this language is pitiable. It produced a dignified reply from the French king, stating that he had seen a letter addressed to him of Valois, which, therefore, a king of France could not consider as intended for him; that, however, it was notorious that the King of England had entered France, and was doing much mischief; that there were, in his possession, other letters under the hand and seal of the same King of France acknowledging him, Philip, as sovereign of France, and as his liege lord, and promising obedience to him. And that, when it should seem good to himself, he would find means to drive the King of England out of France; trusting to be helped, in this cause, by Him from whom all power proceeds.

After this, having passed the remainder of the summer to no purpose, in besieging Tournay, being again reduced to borrow money at exorbitant interest, Edward was glad to listen to the treaties of the Countess Jane of Hainault, being alike closely related to himself and to the French king, and was sincerely anxious to see them on friendly terms, and her benevolent wishes were gratified, accepting her mediation; and then, on the 25th of September, 1340, a truce for nine months, which was afterwards renewed for another year.

The King of England must now have perceived that he had not earlier attended to the advice of Pope Benedict XII., who had interfered in the beginning of this war, in a manner well becoming his claim to be regarded as the common father of all Christendom; though, in consequence of his

of France, and constantly resident there, and had not unreasonably suspected him of too subservient to King Philip. The truth however, that the papal court, being involved in a serious quarrel with the Emperor of Germany, and for a while set up a rival pope of his own, Benedict was afraid of irritating either of contending sovereigns, and had, therefore, only dared to excommunicate the Flemings, when he perceived that his exhortations to peace had no effect. The personal authority of the popes had indeed considerably diminished in this age, by their excessive dependance on the French kings, and partly by Pope Clement's being obliged to listen to the flattery of his predecessors, Boniface VIII. a profligate, who scoffed at God and His holy

But as long as the people continued to believe that their being admitted, or shut out from heaven, depended more on their dying in good or ill fellowship with their Church than on any thing else, the authority of that Church over their minds was irresistible, and, therefore, so much of that authority as was attributed to the pope, fell into the hands of the bishops and ministering priests, who thus became more powerful, at the very time that their ecclesiastical chief was becoming less so. It does not seem too that their flocks were just as much affected by a bishop's curse, whether it was laid upon them for some horrible offence against the divine law, or for some mere worldly end. Thus the Lord Admiral, who had, jointly with the Lord Guy Bryan, held the office of High Admiral, during much of this century, and had been mainly instrumental in gaining the great victory off Sluys; was soon after compelled, by superstitious fears, to walk barefoot in public, and to his shirt, with his head uncovered, carry a huge wax candle to the high altar of Northampton Cathedral, and there humbly to beg pardon of God and *Bateman*, for depredations committed in his

parks ; and this though King Edward had interested himself in his favour, as actually : the bishop's estates, with a threat of confi them for the remainder of his life, if he wou release Lord Morley from his curse on easier The ruined state of the king's finances ma glad of any popular excuse for laying hold way of the property of different prelates, regard to law. But the same circumstance Edward to submit to various demands on th of his Parliament, as the price of its consen new grants of money.

Having settled the terms of the truce, th had embarked for England without giving hi ters there any warning of his purpose ; so 1 vessel had sailed up the Thames, a Nov. 30. himself, had landed, about midnight Tower, before they knew that he had quit continent. The next morning the Bishops chester and Litchfield, who filled the off chancellor and treasurer, were surprised to orders depriving them of their posts, and de them the king's prisoners. Several other cerned in collecting the revenue, were impris the same time ; but Archbishop Stratford, w governed the country during Edward's abse the name of the young prince, made his es Canterbury. The king charged all these with having defrauded him of the greater the money that must have been raised by the the ninths ; declaring that he, himself, had received it ; and that the failure of this supp obliged him to forego all the advantages w would otherwise soon have reaped from a w dertaken, as he averred, chiefly in consequ the urgent advice of the archbishop. This w prelate, thus publicly denounced as the ill cou who had flattered instead of checking his sove besetting sin of ambition, had himself continu

re, with Bishop Orleton, the same unprincipled
 as in the last reign ; bribing the pope to give
 promotion, in defiance of the rights of electors,
 laws of the land, and the displeasure of the king ;
 he had become primate of England, and Orleton
 succeeded him in the rich bishopric of Win-
 ter. As, however, the papal court expected to
 paid the higher, in proportion to the offence
 both to the kings and people, by compelling
 person, lawfully chosen, to give way to some
 idate named by the pope, they who got their
 erment, in this manner, were involved thereby
 ch debts as nearly ate up the whole income of
 sees. So that king Edward, who must have
 aware of what was, then, quite notorious, had
 ly himself to blame ; for having trusted these
 guing prelates with the receipt, or distribution
 ublic money. It is likely enough, that there may
 been much speculation ; but yet, as the king's
 sors had received the ninths in kind, when the
 rs were not willing to redeem them, it is equally
 y, that they had found it impossible to raise so
 as was expected by the sale of articles, with
 h their proceedings would overstock the market.
 carelessly the probable produce of a tax was
 dated, in this age, appears from what happened
 many years after*, when parliament gave the
 a subsidy of £50,000, to be raised by the payment
 1. 2s. 3d. from every parish. It is obvious that
 grant assumed the number of parishes in the
 dom to be about 45,000 : whereas, the collectors,
 they had gone their several circuits, gave in
 nts making the whole number to be little more
 8,600. On hearing which, the king raised
 parochial assessment, by an order of council, to
 16s. ; requiring the richer parishes to make up
 sum for such as could not pay it.

* In 1371.

But whatever might be the justice of *the* suspicions against archbishop Stratford, *the* had the skill to make his defence popular. when Edward would have had him put upon trial, before persons commissioned to enquire the causes of the deficiency of the revenue, the bishop insisted on being allowed to take his seat in parliament; and being tried, there, by his peers, farther managed to represent his prosecution more than a part of that severe system, to which men might see the king's necessities were due to him, for the purpose of extorting money. And alarmed the commons, that they presented the king such petitions for his sanction, as, had they been thus become, and continued to be laws, would have very materially shaken the royal authority. From some of these petitions, they even besought him to order that all the chief officers of the state should, from that time forward, be chosen in parliament. The king, in compliance, refused to accede, altogether, to this; but he assented to join them in passing an act, which, by confirming Magna Charta, and establishing the principles claimed by the archbishop, bound the king and his ministers sworn in parliament to do their duty, and also to suspend their commissions, on the day after the opening of every new parliament, having given an account before it of their conduct. they should be either punished, removed, or re-elected. The act farther noticed the inconvenience which would be in thus suspending the judges: but he declared them subject to the same parliamentary enquiry.

Having secretly determined that his ministers should not be thus dependent on parliament, but rather than on himself, the king resolved upon a measure so likely to irritate the nation, that he could not perceive how dangerous it would be to have archbishop Stratford driven, at the same time, to extremities. He, therefore, first declared that

clear of all the charges brought against him. And then he issued a letter to the sheriffs; bidding them take notice, that whereas the late parliament had apparently obtained his consent to an act prejudicial to his royal dignity, he had but pretended to consent to it, for fear of greater evil; and did now declare that, inasmuch as it never had his real consent, it was not to be deemed any part of the law of the land, but utterly null and void.

The truce made with France, had, by Philip's desire, included Scotland; where Baliol had been ~~being~~ ground every year. But it was the duty of king Edward, as the acknowledged lord of Ireland, to have employed his talent for business, and his power, in reducing that distracted country to order. Of late his criminal desire for foreign conquest had tempted him to leave the native Irish, now fallen back into the most wretched barbarism, to slay, or be slain by the scarcely more civilized De Burghs and Fitzgeralds. During this time the office of chief governor had been entrusted first to the prior of Kilmainham, and then to simple knights; none of them powerful enough to keep the great Norman, or as they should be called the Anglo-Irish, barons in submission; and, therefore, driven to purchase their support, by allowing them, as each rose in importance, to erect their domains into *palatinates*; or, in other words, to become as nearly independent sovereigns by law, as they already were by force. There were now no less than nine counties made palatine; whose earls, in consequence, held themselves entitled to create knights, and even barons; to appoint judges; and decide all causes in their own courts; and to refuse the admission of the king's writs. Had Edward carried over into Ireland such an army as was so ill employed in the invasion of France, all parties must have submitted to his commands; and even had he been tempted to commit the *same devastations* as disgraced his continental

campaign, this would have been less dreadful than the perpetual and savage warfare which his-
tories were unable to prevent the Irish from waging. He indeed burnt houses and barns; but they
treated not to burn a church, and shut up the congregation under its flaming roof.

So far, however, the king had done well and wisely; that he had laid urgent commands on his ministers in Ireland, to make no distinction between the one race and the other, in redressing wrongs or punishing offences. He was also most desirous that the Irish should universally consent to be governed by laws, which visited murder with more severity than did their favorite Brehon code. But some of these wretched people were shrewd enough to perceive, that a law which permitted them to kill a fellow-creature to death for a slight penalty left the vindictive passions of their enemies unstrained. But when the native Irish of Leinster petitioned the Anglo-Irish parliament to admit them to share the protection of the English laws, the petition was refused: and still greater atrocities were the consequence of their indignation. It is difficult to assign any other motive for this refusal, than the unwillingness of the Anglo-Irish barons to expose themselves to the punishments which the English law inflicted on such crimes as they were resolved to continue the habit of committing against the Irish. But when the king heard of the obstacles which these factious families thus threw in the way of the peaceable submission of the Irish, he was disposed to behave towards the former with such leniency as could not be supported in practice; and, on July 27, 1341, made either in his own or his father's name, that all grants of estates in Ireland should be resumed. And, that no person of English descent, born in Ireland; married, or possessing estates there; should be promoted to continue to hold any office in his government.

; unless the same person had also landed in England *. He had, on the other hand, ordered, that all Englishmen, becoming possessed of lands in Ireland, should go and reside there; or else pay out of their rents for the sufficient defence of their property; under penalty of having the said lands levied by the king's officers, and employed as the governor should judge best. The present violent exclusive order, therefore, naturally exposed the English who had obeyed this command, as well as all others recently settled in Ireland, to the envy and hatred of the older Anglo-Irish. It soon excited a spirited remonstrance from the latter; complaining of being thus treated by their sovereign enemies; and calling upon him to consider, how it would happen, that they were impoverished by the exactions made upon them in his name, and he never received for what they paid: though his castles in Ireland were falling to ruin for want of repairs; the governors, who were sent there poor, grew poorer.

After this the king's ambition again tempted him to renew the war with France; and he then directed the governor to procure for him the aid of the Anglo-Irish nobility, on the best terms he could ^{1843.}

: thus giving up, for the present, all his projects of reducing them to live as peaceable subjects. The circumstances which immediately led to the renewal of the French war, arose out of a dispute concerning

prejudiced was the king, at this period, against every exclusively Irish, that having heard that copper coin, then common in England, had come into common use in Ireland he issued a proclamation, forbidding any man either to buy, or sell *black money*, as he called it. But his Irish council sent him word back, that there was no possibility of dealing without copper coin; in the lack of silver pence; so he was obliged to issue another order, three months after, recalling the first.

Edward himself coined the first gold ever used as money in England. This coinage consisted of nobles, half, and quarter nobles; the highest being of the value of 6s. 8d. in that time, or of a sovereign in our times.

the succession to the Duchy of Brittany. The duke having died childless, and his next brother being also dead without male issue, Charles de Blois, the grandson of the latter, by his daughter, was properly heir at law. But there was a younger brother of the late duke, John, Earl of Montfort, who claimed the inheritance, as the senior male head of his family; asserting that it should not justly pass away by a female. The ground of the dispute, therefore, 'was very much like that between Edward and Philip for the crown of France. De Blois' claim resembling the former; Montfort being like that of Philip. When, however, the question came before the King of France, as paramount Lord of Brittany, he decided in favour of De Blois, observing, that the Salic law, against suffering inheritance to pass by a female, regarded only the succession to the kingdom; and was not applicable to the case of a province as Brittany. This distinction was supported by facts*; yet, as Charles De Blois was his nephew, King Philip could not escape being suspected of partiality in deciding the question when the Earl of Montfort appealed to Edward, the rightful sovereign of France, and Edward in turn declared, that the duchy ought to be his, and each betrayed a want of common honesty. Edward had a right to the kingdom of France through his mother Isabella, Charles de Blois having a clearer right to the Duchy of Brittany, through his mother. And if Montfort had a just claim to the duchy, Edward could have none to being called the rightful sovereign of France. Yet did the King of England again begin the war, with the confession of carrying fire and slaughter among the people, who should dare to oppose either claim, or Montfort's.

He had, however, the art to remind his parlia-

* See Vol. I. pp. 358. 458.

that it was with their consent he originally took up arms for the recovery of his inheritance, as he called it. And by repeatedly asking the advice of his prelates, barons, and commons, as to the method, or prudence of maintaining the war, he brought them to consider his measures so much their own acts, that they made far less difficulty than they otherwise would have done, of subjecting themselves to very heavy burdens, to support the expences of his campaigns. In this he was wiser than King Philip, who affected to regard his subjects as people entitled to have no will of their own; and being too proud to ask them for repeated grants of money, stooped to defraud them of it by various mean devices. One of these consisted in making his subjects pay their taxes in coin of a proper weight; and then paying them for any services done to the crown in light money; or calling a certain quantity of silver four shillings, when he received it, and insisting that every body should call the same quantity five shillings when he paid it. Another of his devices was, to require that all the salt made in the country should be sold to him at a certain price, and then selling it out at a much higher; and farther requiring, that every family should buy a certain quantity of salt from his officers, whether they wanted so much or not. This last burden has continued to be imposed upon the people of France even to our time; and is called the *gabelle*.

Edward III, though more careful to preserve the good opinion of his subjects, tampered with the coin of England twice in the same manner; but not to so great an extent. The first time, he coined as many silver pence as came to 1*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.*, out of what he had received as but one pound. The next, which was in 1351 *, he made his creditors accept the same

* From that date to the 13th year of Hen. IV. the pound sterling of silver money was of the same weight as 2*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* in shillings of our time.

quantity of silver as worth 1*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* ; by coining it into as many pence as made up that sum.

In his money transactions with foreigners, the King of England displayed a lamentable indifference to the warning of Scripture ; which declares, that *a false balance is an abomination to the Lord* * ; leaving us to reflect how offensive before him must be every wider departure from honest dealing, if even this has been pronounced not beneath his notice.

The merchants of Italy were, in these ages, the richest in the world ; and two Florentine families, the Bardi and the Peruzzi, could influence the commerce of great part of Europe, by any change in the employment of their capital †. No wealth, however, is sufficient to satisfy the desires of men who have set their hearts on riches. For the sake of the high interest promised, the Bardi made no scruple of lending Edward 900,000*l.* to which the Peruzzi added 600,000*l.* ; knowing well that the money was to be used in fitting out an armament to invade and rob his neighbours, the French. This transaction was very much the same as if one of their less wealthy fellow-citizens, tempted by the hope of deriving some advantage from the spoil, had lent a purse of dollars to another, for the purpose of enabling him to buy a horse and arms, wherewith to sally out and plunder some neighbour. But the conduct of the world, and the judgments it pronounces, are so directly opposed to that most just rule laid down by our Saviour, saying, “ *Unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required* ‡ ;” that whoever had been called upon to pronounce sentence over the lender of a few dollars, would have thought it right to condemn him to share the robbers’ punishment ;

* Prov. xi. 1.

† In the third year of this reign the Bardi hired from the king the customs in all the ports of England for 60*l.* a day, of modern money.

‡ Luke xii. 48.

whilst these wealthier lenders are imitated without scruple. In this case, however, the ambition which these Florentines were willing, for the sake of filthy lucre, to encourage in Edward, was righteously made to bring about their own ruin. Without their help he might have felt, that it was hopeless to think of conquering France. But when their loan was added to the resources which his subjects supplied, the greatest check to his desire of power and military glory was removed. And having once recommenced the war, his debts did but make him resolve to struggle on for success, even against hope. When this resolution was formed, he cared not what promises he had given. All the money he could thenceforward collect was swallowed up in the pay and the fitting out of armies ; or to obtain such a character for generosity and splendour, as might allure, if possible, the unemployed knights and men-at-arms of half Europe into his service. For this last purpose he gave repeated tournaments, and kept a round table open to such guests, in his castle of Windsor ; at a daily expence of fifty pounds. The claims of his creditors were then neglected, as beneath his attention, and the refusal of interest, with the general belief that their loan would never be repaid, so shook the credit of the Bardi and Peruzzi, that those two great houses soon became bankrupts ; and their failure involved the ruin of a numerous and industrious population, who depended on them for employment and support.

A. D.
1345.

The military operations of this second war were conducted by King Edward with the same sinful indifference to the misery which he occasioned, as his former campaigns ; and it is observable, that events were so over-ruled as to direct his desolating progress towards those parts of France which had not suffered before. The king would again have wished to make his attacks from Flanders ; that its populous and well-cultivated districts might serve to re-

cruit and maintain his forces whilst collecting, or if driven back. But he was diverted from this policy by losing, first the favour of the Emperor of Germany; and then the support of Artveldt. The former took from him the title of Imperial Vicar, and the authority attached to it. The latter was murdered by the people of Ghent; for endeavouring to persuade the Flemings to cast off the family of their ancient earls, and offer the earldom to the young prince of Wales. Hence, although the cities of Flanders sent the king assurances of their continued attachment to his cause, he preferred invading the territories of Philip from his own province of Guienne; or by carrying an army across the channel, and landing it, at once, on the opposite coast.

The inhabitants of Brittany were the first to suffer from the contest for the succession to their duchy. De Montfort fell into the hands of the French King; and his countess was besieged in Hennebon, the last strong place their party possessed. She was a woman of masculine courage;

A. D. 1342. But the citizens had urged her to surrender; her captains had begun to consider a longer defence impracticable; and the Bishop of Leon had drawn up terms for capitulation, when the countess, who sat watching the sea, from the uppermost chamber of a lofty tower, exclaimed, "the English; I see the English!" Every window of the castle, and every battlement that commanded a view towards the harbour, was straightway thronged with anxious gazers; whose impatience was changed into clamorous joy, when they beheld the nearer approach of a fleet of transports, which had been long detained by contrary winds. This seasonable succour was headed by the bold Sir Walter Manny. Edward himself afterwards crossed over into Bretagne, with 12,000 men; but the pillage of towns, the burning of cottages and farms, and the murder

of the vanquished, only made the inhabitants of fortified places more resolute in their resistance ; and thus the sieges of two or three strong cities exhausted the king's time and means.

On the frontiers of Guienne, the Earl of Derby waged a less disgraceful war, at the head of an army of English and Gascons. But he was compelled to retreat before John, Duke of Normandy, eldest son to the King of France, who brought against him a force, reputed at 100,000 men. The bravest of the earl's officers were already shut up in the fortress of Aiguillon, when King Edward and the Prince of Wales, henceforward called, from his suit of dark steel armour, the Black Prince, landed in Normandy. They had been urged to dis-
July 12,
1346.
 embark on the Norman coast by Godfrey de Harcourt, one of several French nobles whom Philip had turned into enemies ; by putting their relations to death, on unproved charges of treason. The army of Edward was composed of 6000 men-at-arms, and 10,000 English bowmen : with 6000 Irish, and 12,000 Welsh, who fought on foot. It traversed Normandy in three divisions ; destroying, or carrying off every kind of property. The booty collected was very great, as this province had enjoyed a long peace since its union with France in 1202 * ; but the loss of the inhabitants must have very far exceeded the gains of their robbers. And the Knights of France observed with horror, that if one of their companions fell from his saddle in an engagement with this mixed force, the rules of chivalry were no protection to him ; as the Welsh or Irish would cut his throat with their long knives, whilst he lay on the ground. Edward was vexed at losing the value of the ransom which these gentlemen might have paid ; and he, or his English officers, sent all the wealthy citizens of the Norman towns on shipboard,

* See vol. I. p. 458.

to force them to redeem themselves with money; but no effort seems to have been made by the king to check any atrocities committed by his rude soldiery on the peasantry or the poor.

The pillage of Caen put the English in possession of a curious document, by which the Normans were found to have lately stipulated, with their sovereign Philip, for the division of the estates of the king and gentry of England; in the expectation of their being able to conquer it with an army of 24,000 men, to be led by Duke John. A copy of this covenant Edward sent over, to be read in parliament; that the alarm or irritation of the English, on hearing that their inheritance had been thus bargained for, might dispose them to support him the more heartily in his war against France. He could not, however, but be conscious that he himself reigned over England as the representative of one Norman conqueror; and yet he chose to regard this foolish project, for a second Norman conquest, as a most atrocious offence. He even gave orders for revenging it, by a general massacre of all the inhabitants of Caen, to be begun the next day; after which the town, then larger than any city in England, except London, was to be reduced to ashes. This horrible order, however, De Harcourt persuaded him to recall, though not till many enormities had been committed.

From Normandy Edward advanced almost to Paris; within sight of which the beautifully situated village of St. Cloud was burnt by his troops. In the meanwhile Philip was in his capital, with an army which daily grew larger; and the King of England found that, though suffered to advance thus far, his opponent was now taking measures, not only to stop his farther progress, but to cut off his retreat, by causing the fords to be guarded in his rear, and the bridges broken down. Edward's barbarous method of warfare made it alike ruinous for *his own* army to remain stationary, or retire upon

untry which his advance had desolated. He, before, no sooner discovered it to be impracticable to push on, than he felt it necessary to retreat along the coast by a new line of march.

Philip now followed the English army with a very superior force; and when Edward reached the Somme, and himself shut in, between his enemies and the river, which he could find no means of passing. The French drew closer; and the English left the camp of Airaines in such haste, that their pursuers

found their meat on the spits; the bread in the ovens; and some tables already spread. That day the king of France moved no farther; satisfied that the river, deepening as it got nearer its mouth, and the bank on which he himself had sent to guard the opposite bank, would oblige Edward to await his attack the next morning. But a countryman, prisoner in the English camp, had been tempted, by the offer of liberty for himself and twenty friends, to promise the king of England that he would lead him to a place where the river would be found fordable when the tide ebbed. Thither the English army repaired the next day; but, before the tide had gone sufficiently to make the ford practicable, they

saw a large body of French horse approach the bank. It proved, however, unable to prevent the passage of the English; which was just come off, when the advance of Philip's numerous host reached the bank Edward had quitted; but found the river again rapidly rising. The French army was then obliged to re-ascend the river, as far as the

mouth of the Somme at Abbeville; and Edward, in the interim, took possession of two strong places near the mouth of the Somme, from which his troops might embark in case of necessity, if unsuccessful in the battle; which he deemed it prudent not to decline. He acknowledged, too, that as his retreat had brought him into view of the undeniably inheritance of his family, he would there combat Philip with an easier con-

science. The French were again so nigh at hand, that a day's halt, on his part, would bring the two armies together; so, having taken an advantageous position, with the forest of Cressy in his rear, he bade his men retire early to rest, that they might be the more fit to encounter the fatigues of the morrow.

That evening the king gave a cheerful supper to his nobles. And when they withdrew, he went into his oratory; and, falling on his knees before the altar, prayed that the issue of the approaching combat might be to his honour. At midnight he ~~laid~~ down, and slept; and, rising early the next morning, attended mass with the Black Prince, his son. The unhappy king knew not that God hath expressly declared, that He regards the house of prayer as offensively polluted by the presence and language of such as can imagine He ever gives deliverance for the purpose of encouraging sin. *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, saith the Lord; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes*?* Like the King of Babylon, Edward received power to afflict a sinful people; but, like the same king, he was not the less guilty before God, for *shewing them no mercy*†. He had not received an express command, as Joshua or Saul did, to become the executioner of divine wrath. It was in his heart to satisfy his own ambitious desires; regardless of the express commands of Him who hath said, *Thou shalt not covet, and thou shalt do no murder*. But, intending disobedience, he was overruled to do the will of the Judge of all the earth. And it is particularly observable, that the evil passions of his adversaries, and events confessedly in the hands of the Almighty, had a greater effect in

* Jer. vii. 8—11.

† See Jer. xlvii.

deciding the battle which ensued, than all the skill and firmness of the King of England ; though both were eminently conspicuous.

The French, who were 100,000 strong, had fifteen miles to march from Abbeville to Cressy ; Aug. 26. and a heavy rain made it so fatiguing, that when Philip's quarter-masters reported to him their having observed the English resting on the ground, they intended to take up, and eating the provisions which Edward had caused to be distributed ; they thought it necessary to recommend to their sovereign, that he should give his troops a night's rest, before they attacked the English lines. Philip accordingly commanded a halt. But the pride of the great lords of France made each of them push on, to occupy the foremost position. So that their king's command was unheeded ; and their advance, being without a plan, was altogether disorderly. By this confused movement, King Philip, himself, was borne on with the crowd ; till he beheld the English, drawn up in regular array, before him. At this sight, his anger got the better of his prudence ; and he called out, to have the Genoese brought to the front, and the battle begun. These Genoese were a body of veteran cross-bowmen. But they were tired with the march they had made, in their armour, on foot ; and the strings of their bows had been wetted with the rain. So they told their commanders, " they were not in a condition to perform any thing great that day." They immediately moved forward, however, at the king's summons, to take up the position, which he wished them to occupy. To make way for their doing this, the most forward of Philip's men-at-arms were obliged to draw back ; thereby pressing upon the irregular mass in their rear, who straightway took alarm ; supposing them to have been driven in by the English. At this moment the sun burst out full in the face of the *Genoese*, and made it impossible for them

to take any aim with their nearly useless bows ; yet they boldly advanced towards the English, with three loud and distinct shouts ; which did but add to the panic already begun behind them. On the other hand, the English archers had kept their bowstrings covered whilst it rained ; and their arms were unwearied. They were, therefore, able to pour upon the Genoese a volley of arrows, shot with such force, as to pierce their armour. Whereby, in a short time, so many were killed, or grievously wounded, that the survivors turned their backs to escape. Philip then perceived that, in his impatience to have the engagement begun, he had suffered his knights and men at arms, whose superior numbers, with their warlike habits, should have secured him the victory, to be so shut up between the bowmen and the crowd in their rear, that they could not approach the English. To remedy this mismanagement, he had the barbarity to call out to his nobles, “ Quick ! kill this rabble ; or they will stop up our way to no purpose.” The nobles made no scruple of attempting to obey this order. But the Genoese, becoming desperate, resolved to sell their lives dearly ; and the astonished English saw their adversaries engaged in a murderous struggle with each other. Knights of France cutting down unhappy men already wounded in the service of the king ; and soldiers who received his pay, dragging his nobles from their horses to the ground ; while their mutual fury exposed both, unprotected and unrevenged, to fall by the arrows which Edward’s archers continued to discharge among them*.

the mean while, the greater part of the French army

* The way of employing gunpowder to fire bullets out of cannon had recently been discovered ; an Italian writer heard that King Edward increased the confusion of his adversaries, at the crisis, by employing them. But Froissart, who was living a long way not far from Cressy, and has described the battle with abundant details, makes no mention of any such artillery.

had already taken to flight ; though, here and there, a body of knights, disentangling themselves from the mass, burst upon the English lines with such violence, as could scarcely be resisted. The Black Prince was, at one moment, in such danger from an attack of this kind, made by the Earls of Flanders and Alençon, that a knight rode off to King Edward for rescue. He found the king on an eminence, from whence he could observe the movements of both armies. "Is my son dead, struck to the ground, or wounded," said Edward, "that he cannot help himself?" "No, sire ; but he is hardly pressed." "Turn back then to him, and those who sent you ; and tell them to let the boy win his spurs*. I would have the day, and the honour of it be his own ; if God so will." The *honour* to be obtained did not depend, in the king's opinion, on the goodness of a cause ; but on the obstinacy with which the defence of it might be conducted in the midst of dangers, and on the success of that obstinacy.

The next morning a thick fog prevailed ; and Edward, who had prudently withheld his men from separating, for the purpose of pursuit, now moved cautiously forward, to ascertain what was become of the enemy. The King of France, and the host which accompanied him to the fields of Cressy, had fled ; but the English fell on several large bodies of armed peasantry, whom Philip had summoned from the neighbouring districts, and who, ignorant of what had passed, were searching, in the haze, for the royal army. This day was the Lord's day ; but the reverence due to Him, who chose to sanctify one day in seven for holy thoughts and solemn worship, did not induce Edward to forbid the needless cruelty of slaughtering thousands of these poor people, who would have returned to their homes as readily,

* When any one was made a knight, buckling on a pair of spurs was part of the ceremony.

and more gladly, at his command, than they had quitted them at Philip's. The numbers thus murdered, are said to have exceeded those slain on the day of battle.

The heralds, whom the King of England ordered to count and examine the dead, reported to him, on their return, that altogether there had perished, on the French side, eleven princes *, 1,200 knights, and 30,000 persons of inferior condition. They would have done well to add, that all these were his fellow-creatures; men, who in common with him, acknowledged *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all* †; and that this same *God and Father* of the slayer and the slain, has required all, without exception for conquerors, to *have compassion one of another, to love as brethren, and to be full of pity* ‡. But the king went on, as an instrument of evil, to perform his appointed task; though the immediate wages of his toil were but *vanity and vexation of spirit*. For the deluge of human blood, which he had shed, had still gained him none of the dominion he lusted after. It only enabled him to continue his retreat unmolested, and lay siege to Calais.

Yet in the eyes of other ambitious men, who observed Edward's course, his lot soon appeared a most enviable one; when they saw him made the

* Among these was a King of Bohemia, who, being old and blind, yet could not remain away from scenes of strife. Though a king, his ambition had kept him constantly dependent on other sovereigns; having always something to ask of them. He had even brought himself to boast of this; and had caused the words, *Ich dien, i. e. I serve*, to be painted under three ostrich feathers, which he bore on his crest. When the King of Bohemia's armour was laid before the Black Prince, whose respectful obedience to his own father was the most truly amiable part of his character, he resolved to adopt these words as his own; at once to remind others of his share in this victory, and himself of a duty which he delighted to perform. Hence *Ich dien*, and the *feathers*, became the motto and crest of a Prince of Wales.

† Eph. iv. 5, 6.

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 8.

urge of the Scotch as well as of the French. For his same year David King of Scotland, who had overthrown his father's throne, having been tempted to lead a large army into Cumberland and Durham, pillage the country, was defeated at Nevil's Cross by the archbishop of York, and lord Henry Percy; and carried as a prisoner to London, with several of his chief nobles. Nor did the capture of Calais contribute much less than these victories to the glory of Edward, in the estimation of the world. For, his rapacious mode of warfare having defeated the citizens resolve on defending their town to the last extremity, the delay of eleven months, during which he remained encamped under their walls, gave Philip time to collect an army of 150,000 men for its relief. And yet, so skilfully had Edward provided for the defence of the only two roads, by which Calais and his camp were accessible, that Philip, though informed that the inhabitants having eaten even their horses and dogs, were perishing with hunger, felt obliged to disappoint their hopes, and withdraw; after having approached so near, that they could descry his banners from the roofs of their houses. There being then no other prospect of relief, the governor requested to speak with Sir Walter Manny, and desired him to let king Edward know, that the citizens of Calais were ready to capitulate. Edward's first reply to Sir Walter was, that they must submit unconditionally; leaving him to put to death whom he would: and to fix the ransoms of whom he would. Among the reasons for his hard-hearted demand, one was said to be, that the people of Calais had put him to such a heavy expence by the length and obstinacy of their resistance. Which, considering the king made no scruple of letting his soldiers plunder the towns that surrendered, was as if a robber should charge the good man of the house, for the trouble it gave him to break open his doors. Sir Walter, however, frankly told the king, that he might find he had in-

jured himself. "For if you should wish to undertake the defence of any of your castle, you will not go very willingly; since if you put them to death, their friends will do the same in a like case." The English barons present to Walter spoke rightly. On which the king bade him go tell the governor, that if six of the citizens of Calais, would come forth, bare-headed, with halters round their necks, to suffer whatever he should choose to inflict, that the rest might be spared.

When this reply was carried back into the castle, the governor bade the town bell be tolled, and summoned together to hear the conditions. Alone they were to expect any mercy. In proclaiming it aloud before them, the sobbing of men, women and children, were the answer he could, for some time, obtain from the assembled crowd. At length Eustace de St. Pierre, the richest merchant in Calais, stood up and said, "Sirs; it would be a sad thing to suffer a multitude to perish by famine, or otherwise, if there is a way of saving them. I have succeeded in receiving grace and pardon from our Lord, to save this people, that I am willing to be the first to surrender myself with a halter about my neck. On hearing these generous words, all ranks pressed around Eustace, throwing themselves at his feet; kissing them; and weeping over his noble resolution first was followed by John de Bienvillain, who might have pleaded the importance of his two fair daughters; but gave himself up for one of the fellow citizens, with no more words than that his friend Eustace shall not want my company. Like said Jacques de Vissant, and Pierre de Baille. Two others completed this truly honourable party, who, carrying with them the keys of the city, entered Edward's presence, in the disguise, on which he had insisted; and before him, craved his mercy. The king

Aug. 4,
1346.

tated; but malignant passions seemed to have the entire mastery over him; for while the nobles around were moved to tears, at seeing these brave men reduced by their self-devotion to make so humiliating an appearance, Edward bade their heads be straight-way cut off. Manny again spoke for them; but to no purpose. Till Queen Philippa, falling on her knees, besought the king her husband, "in the name of the Son of Mary, and by the love he bore her;" to have mercy. "Lady," said the king, "I could have better liked, you had been elsewhere. But I cannot refuse you. Do with them as you will." On this the queen invited them to rise from their lowly posture. And like one who knew how to value such conduct as theirs, she made her attendants clothe them; adding a present of six crowns to each; and then causing them to be conducted in safety beyond the English camp. Her moderate bounty was not unacceptable to these lately wealthy citizens. For their whole property, and that of all their fellow-townsmen was seized by the king; who, after imprisoning such persons as he thought able to raise money for their own redemption, ordered every other soul to quit the town forthwith. One priest, and two old men, were the only persons excepted from this order. They were to stay behind, for the purpose of assisting his officers in allotting off the houses of the late inhabitants to Englishmen; whom the king resolved to plant there. But Eustace and his companions had not *forborne to deliver them that drew unto death and were ready to be slain*, and they found God faithful in *rendering to them according to their works* *. They had consented to suffer more than their neighbours, and it was shortly seen that they suffered less. On becoming calm, the king reflected that such a disposition, as they had shewn, was well worth encouraging among his own people. And when, two months

* *Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.*

as an English town. It was made by Edward of the ports of the staple, to which alone wool, tin, and lead might be carried, for the foreign market. It regularly sent two members to parliament and continued subject to the English crown, all the other continental possessions of the Plantagenets were lost. But this was a very inadequate compensation for the expence of this attack upon France on which king Edward had expended £328,600. It was none for the evil spirit of national hatred between the French and English, to which these wars, seduced, gave rise. For from the conquest to this time, the gentry at least of the two nations and their monarchs, had regarded each other as countrymen; the kings of England in any former dispute with the sovereigns of France, having only what other powerful vassals of that, as yet, ill-illuminated kingdom, were accustomed to do in like

Sept. 28. Mutual exhaustion now made both again willing to accept a truce, under mediation of the pope. But neither kings nor priests, nor people, awakened from their neglect of the word of God, to turn aside the coming storm

who gloried in his strength at noon, was carried out the next day a putrid corpse, to be thrown with a number of others into one common pit.

In England, the plague made its appearance at Dorchester, much about the same time as in the north of France; the infection having been conveyed across the channel, either by passengers, or goods, or in the air itself. By November it reached London; and then travelled northwards. In the meanwhile, continued rains from June to December, filled the country with unwholesome vapours: for the drainage of the soil was still almost entirely unattended to by its cultivators. The whole population was thus brought into a sickly state, but too well suited to receive the seeds of any disorder. And though the inhabitants of towns were most exposed to the effects of contagion, their abodes being crowded together in uncleanly and narrow streets, the countryman had an additional source of disease to fear. For the poisonous taint infected even the cattle; so that the carcasses of sheep, oxen and horses lay scattered in the fields, and the birds of prey seeming afraid to touch them, their putrefaction contaminated the air still more. The terrified farmer gave up attending his flocks. The courts of justice were unopened; and priests fled from their churches, that they might not be compelled to attend the dying, and perish with them. But the plague followed the peasant to his cabin, and the priest to his cell. How many it destroyed cannot be known; as registers were very rarely kept. In the county of Norfolk, however, the deaths are stated with great particularity, as amounting to 57,374; exclusive of the friars and other clergy, supposed to have been recorded in some other document. In Kent, we have an account of the Bishop of Rochester; as losing out of his own household, four chaplains, five esquires, ten domestics, seven young clerks, and six pages; so that he had not a person left to attend

upon him *. In London, the ordinary places of burial were soon filled; and half its population would have been destroyed in three months, the mortality gone on at the rate of 200 a day, which is said to have been for several weeks. The average number of corpses brought to a field of thirteen acres †, purchased by Sir Walter Mauny for the interment of the poor. The Scotch lords, with sinful joy, of what they called, "the foul disease of the English." And, tempted by their thirst for revenge and gain, they collected an army for the purpose of invading England, whilst its defenders were dying, or stupified with terror. But before they could cross the borders, the plague was within their own camp. Five thousand men died, unable to move from the spot where the disorder found them; and their comrades hastening back, each to their own home, carried the infection to the remotest corners of Scotland.

It has been said, that half mankind, it is now probable that a third, perished by this most terrible visitation. The deluge itself, considering how long a longer time there had been for peopling the earth since the descendants of Noah, since, than by the time of Adam before the flood, can scarcely be supposed to have swept away so many of the human race as were slain by this pestilence. And yet, though there were many who sought, by a selfish desertion of their duties, to *hide themselves until the indignation was overpast, when the Lord came out of his temple to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity* ‡; it is hard to discover one of the survivors who sought to learn from his neglected word,

* This would now be thought a very large list of retreating persons; and yet this prelate had told the king, his see was so poor that he ought to be excused attending parliament, whenever summoned to meet farther off than London.

† Where the Charter-house now stands.

‡ Is. xxvi. 20, 21.

had *provoked the Lord to anger*. In that holy word, Christians who professed, like *the remnant of Judah*, after their cities were made desolate, to be willing *to obey the voice of the Lord their God*, might have read how the prophet was bid to threaten those who still dared to say, *We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven* *. But the conduct of the people of England was like that of the same rebellious remnant, when they answered Jeremiah, saying, *as for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven* †. For by this very same offensive name, *queen of heaven*, had the Romish priesthood taught the deluded nations of Europe, to address the Virgin Mary; and the performance of the vows that they had vowed to her, was thought to be the most solemn part of their religion, by the greater number of those who bore the name of Christians in this dark age. The Apostle John, describing the faith of the first believers in Christ, said, *"This is the confidence we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us. And we know that if he hear us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him"* ‡. But the pope and his bishops, whilst they boasted to be the successors of the apostles, led their blind followers to think, that in the hour of danger it would be unwise to have *such confidence in Christ*, as not to add to the prayers offered to him, a vow to the Virgin; as, that if she would help them, they would go on pilgrimage to some popular image of our Lady; so they called her; and that they would there make an offering on her altar; or pay for the burning of incense before her. For to the sin of worshipping her, they added the folly of thinking that amongst the images

* Jer. xliv. 25.

† Jer. xliv. 17.

‡ 1 John v. 14, 15.

they had made of her, there were some which would be more pleased to see them honour others. A supposed likeness of her, shewn at Wingham, in Norfolk, was commonly believed to be her greatest favourite of all the images in this country, and numbers came over from Flanders, France, to *bow down to it*.

Had not the Holy Spirit taught the prophet to record the contemptuous defiance of the command of God, which the Jewish idolators uttered, the writer would have feared to copy the language used by the Romish worshippers of the Virgin; for it has equally the air of defiance to the plain worship of God. That word says, *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*. But in a hymn to the Virgin, by Chaucer, where her abilities were highly thought of in Edward's ecclesiastical times, the suppliant was taught to address her thus:-

Almighty, and all merciful Queen !
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To have release of sin, of sorrow, of tene.
To thee I flee, confounded in error.
Help and relieve ! Almighty debonaire
Have mercy of my perilous languor.

We have —————
— *Advocate none* that will dare to pray
For us, and that for as little hire as ye.

Sooth is, He granteth no pity
Without thee : for God, of His goodness
Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee.

How would she, who was *highly favoured and blessed among women* †, have mourned to hear such dishonour done in her name to God and Christ? Would it not have been felt by her meek spirit

* 1 John ii. 1, 2.

† Luke i. 28.

it had been a wound from that very sword, she was warned *should pierce her own soul**! though *the grave had opened her mouth with assurance*, and *the multitude had descended into* ~~by~~ *who were wise in their own eyes, and pruned by their own sight*†, were occupied with things ~~y~~ *; instead of regarding the work of the Lord, considering the operation of his hands*§. The king and his prelates, and his counsellors, appear to have taken no other notice of the pestilence than to devise ways for preventing the lower classes from demanding a higher price for their labour. And yet, the great rise which they found taking place in wages was not occasioned so much by the labourers' demands, as by the employers bidding against each other for help; which they could not dispense with, knew not how else to obtain, in the dearth of labourers for employment. The parliament was so constituted that the farmer might find it less ruinous to let the crop perish on the ground, than to give such high wages, as soon became not uncommon. The harvest which followed the year of the plague, reapers obtained twenty pence a day, in addition to their victuals; whereas before the plague, twelve pence had been reckoned fair pay in the first week of August, and seven pence in the second, and the labourer found his own meat and drink. The legislature might have reflected, that, in offering high wages for labourers, very few would be so imprudent as to offer higher wages than they could hope to be repaid by the sale of the crop; though they might tempt each other on to prices which would not bring so nearly to its full value, as to reduce the farmer and his family to live on that portion which their own bodily labours earned. In this case there would be no profit left to set apart for rent.

* i. 35. † Is. v. 14. ‡ Is. v. 21. § Is. v. 12.

The anxiety of government to prevent an excessive rise of wages, produced two measures, a royal proclamation, forbidding the giving of alms to any able-bodied beggars; and recommending that all men and women under the age of sixty, having no other means of subsistence, should be allotted out in service by the sheriffs. And an act of parliament insisting that the labourers so allotted, and all handicraftsmen, should neither demand nor receive higher wages, or prices than were therein assigned, and had been usual five years before. But such laws have very rarely any useful effect. For a year or two the landlords found it necessary to relinquish their rents. But their property recovered its value the sooner, in consequence of the abundant means of which the workmen thus found themselves possessed, for rearing large families; whose want of employment again obliged them to toil for lower pay.

It is remarkable that, at a time when there was such exorbitant wealth in the Church, many of the officiating clergy should have had salaries so nearly on a level with the labourer's wages, as to make the rise in their demands also, a matter of alarm to their affluent superiors. A monkish chronicler has complained, that, whereas the proprietors of the tithes used to procure persons to perform the Church service, throughout the year, for 8*l.*, or for 3*l.* and their board, it now became difficult to find any priests willing to act as vicars * for 33*l.* a year. The ill custom of looking out for ministers, who would officiate on the lowest terms, instead of anxiously searching for such pastors, as would attend most diligently to the care of their flocks, mainly arose out of that system which Bishop Grostete had in vain endeavoured to check; whereby the choice of the officiating priest was, in fact, transferred from a pa-

* See pp. 37, 38.

on, who must bestow with it certain rights, to men whom the law permitted to bargain what salary they would give. But the evil was still more widely extended, from the continuance of that still greater abuse, which the same good bishop so manfully opposed—the giving of English benefices to the pope's courtiers. This indecent way of robbing the Church was carried to such an extent by Clement VI., that Edward, feeling no superstitious reverence for a pope whom he regarded but as the tool of his rival Philip, gladly joined his parliament in enacting laws to put a stop to it. By the first of these laws, whoever should bring into England any letters from the pope, to the injury of the king's rights; and whoever, in consequence of any such letters, should attempt to impede the patron of any benefice in the exercise of his patronage, were to be punished at the king's discretion. And by a law passed this year, it was enacted, that if the pope, under the pretence of taking especial care for the proper filling up of any benefice, should set aside the choice of the patron or lawful electors, the presentation should fall into the king's hands. 1351.

Yet Edward III., like his predecessors, had frequently allowed private ends to tempt him to encourage the pope in assuming the authority, which he and his parliament thus declared to be a mischievous usurpation. He even went so far in his inconsistency, as to request Clement would take upon him to fill up the primacy of England, as of his own right, when the monks had already chosen Bradwardine archbishop, with due attention to all the forms then required by law. Ufford, dean of Lincoln, who was thus intruded into the archbishopric, reigned, however, but a few months; and the king, who had made Bradwardine his chaplain, having no person whom he wished to prefer before him, acquiesced in the election; but the pope, having been allowed to levy the exorbitant fees paid for

his interference*, adroitly managed to claim them a second time, by insisting that Bradwardine should accept the archbishopric as his gift. In order to raise money for the satisfaction of these demands, the estates of the see were so heavily mortgaged, that the next archbishop, Islip, being defrauded by the same policy, was driven to use the pope's authority for taxing his clergy, to maintain him.

Bradwardine, however, repaired to Avignon, to receive his pall from the pope. But, as the good man had nothing ostentatious about him, his meek and lowly manner was there mistaken for stupidity. Among the principal personages in the papal court was Hugh, the pope's nephew, whom his uncle had raised to the rank of *cardinal*; a dignity which the Romish church regarded as elevating him to a level with sovereign princes. On the day set apart for the solemn service of consecrating the archbishop, and imploring the especial help of the Holy Spirit, this cardinal instructed a clown to enter the hall, riding upon an ass; and to lay a petition before the pope, requesting that he might be made Archbishop of Canterbury, rather than the other.

The pope and his companions were, in outward show, *a royal priesthood*, but they were far from being *holy in all manner of conversation*†; or one, who knew them well, would not have thought them capable of suffering his unseasonable mockery of the learned and pious Englishman. They were, however, too politic not to frown at the insult, thus publicly passed on the highest ecclesiastical dignity in the British isles; in whose honour the King of England could not but be interested.

Thomas Bradwardine, the eminent person thus ridiculed, had received his education at Merton College, Oxford. There he was respected as an able and laborious mathematician. The pride of

* See p. 132.

† 1 Pet. ii. 3. and i. 15.

superior knowledge then tempted him to dislike the humiliating truths, which his attentive mind perceived in the Gospel. "In the schools of philosophers," says he, "I rarely heard a single word said concerning *grace*; unless, indeed, a doubtful expression might sometimes drop from the disputants: but nothing farther. Whereas my ears were assailed, the day through, with assertions, that 'We are the masters of our own free actions; and, that it is in our own power to do well or ill, and to have virtues or vices.' And when I heard those parts of the Scriptures read in the Church, which extol the grace of God, and lower the free-will of man; such as *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that canneeth, but of GOD that sheweth mercy**; and many similar passages; this doctrine of grace was very disagreeable to my unthankful heart. But afterwards, when I reflected on the nature of the divine character, I began to perceive some few distant rays of light; and I return thanks to God, from whom proceeds every good thing, for having given me clearer views. I entreat thee, O Lord," he elsewhere prays, "that, for thy unspeakable benefits, bestowed freely upon me, I may make the most grateful return in my power, and manifest the feelings of my heart by incessant thanksgiving!" The most grateful return he could make, seemed to him to be the employment of all his talents, in *stopping every self-righteous mouth*; that *all the world* being proved guilty before God, and compelled to acknowledge, that, *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*, men might receive with joy the glad tidings of their being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus†. These vital truths he first demonstrated and explained to his pupils at Merton. And it is delightful to discover, that whilst every

* Rom. ix. 16.

† Ibid. iii. 19, 20, 24.

one, within the reach of king Edward's influence, seemed given up to share the guilt, or suffer from the crimes of his ambition, there was a blessed company drinking health and life, from the lips of this zealous servant of God.

It is also remarkable, that whilst Bradwardine carried his studies back to times of purer doctrine, he does not appear to have observed that they were also times in which the superstitious observances, prevalent around him, had scarcely begun to exist. His heart was so fixed on the marrow and pith of religion, that he seems to have had no thoughts to bestow on the follies which, in his age, disgraced its outward form. And here we may discern the wisdom and goodness of God, who made use of him for that service for which he had fitted him. Encouraged by the manner in which his lectures were received within his own University, Bradwardine, with much pains, prepared them for publication. Nor was it long before they found their way into the libraries of colleges and monasteries, throughout Europe. The formality of mathematical arrangement, with which he wrote, served to attract and fix the attention of the learned; but it made his writings incapable of winning the attention of the people. Now, had his eyes been open to all the errors of the ruling Church, he would have exposed them with freedom; and divines would have been too much offended, to listen to his instruction with advantage. He also wanted the boldness necessary to make a powerful leader of a general reformation; but he had such wisdom and meekness as enabled him to press, without alienating his readers, those doctrines which would best prepare men for it. His elevation, too, to the archbishopric, must have had the useful effect of giving additional weight to his written opinions, amongst men disposed to bow down before ecclesiastical authority; whilst he himself, dying before he had held that most responsible office a

was thus mercifully spared the vexation of living with the covetousness of the Roman and the hostility of a refractory clergy ; whose habits he could not have subdued, and over neglected flocks he would have sorrowed as over lost children.

It was not long ere the lessons Bradwardine had produced a scholar more celebrated than his. In the meanwhile, the neighbours of Edward were to be afflicted with *wars and fightings*. Before the king resumed his campaigns, the king asked and obtained his assent to one of the most important laws passed during the whole of his reign. The lands of a person convicted of felony were properly forfeited to the lord of the manor, but, if his offence was adjudged to be treason, the land was seized for the king ; and an inferior lost all his rights over it. This difference in the disposal of the culprit's property, was, in that age, enough to tempt the king's judges to extend the name of *treason* to offences having nothing to do with attempts to overthrow the government ; and on the other hand, it was enough to make the nobles and commons, being little inclined to abate from acts of violence, naturally felt horror, at the probability of being exposed to a dreadful sentence against traitors, for offences, which they could not foresee that the judges would declare them treasons. It so happened that a Northamptonshire knight had confined a man in his castle till he made him consent to pay his persecutor 1000*l.* for the recovery of his liberty. Such an arbitrary government would be, in duty, bound to be ; and with sufficient severity to make a rebellion of it improbable. When this knight was brought before the judge declared his offence *treason* ; on the next day, that he had taken upon him to exercise authority like a king. So strange a decision was fol-

lowed by a request from parliament, that the king
1351. would leave it no longer uncertain, what crimes
were to be reckoned treasonable; and a law, still
often appealed to *, was passed in consequence.

By this law, besides an especial provision for the protection of females of the royal family, it was enacted, that nothing should henceforth be deemed *high treason*, but compassing or intending the death of the king, queen, or heir-apparent;—levying war against the king, or joining his enemies; to be proved by some open act;—counterfeiting his seal, or his coin;—slaying the chancellor, treasurer, or judges, when in the execution of their duty.

No king better understood the advantage, or the way of gaining the hearty support of all conditions of his subjects, in promoting his ambitious views, than Edward III. For this end he sought popularity by attending to their wishes expressed in parliament. But farther to excite in his people a general taste for the occupations of war, and induce them, at the same time, to train themselves for active service, he encouraged tournaments among the gentry; and archery among the yeomen; even affixing penalties to all other popular amusements. For the purpose of filling his armies, he had, indeed, recourse to impressment; from which none but the clergy were exempt: and they were compellable to find substitutes in proportion to their estates. Every one possessing land worth 37*l.* a year, was liable to a summons to join the army with a horse and light armour; every one worth 125*l.*, to come, accompanied by armed followers, and serve as a knight. But then, no sooner had they entered the king's service, than all ranks received very extravagant pay; that of the common soldier being double what the statute declared to be reasonable wages for hay-making: and all were encouraged, instead of being forbidden,

* 25 Edward III. stat. v. chap. ii.

live on the plunder of the enemy, and fill their purses by the pillage of private property. The barons are allured to face fatigue and danger, by his promoting the foremost of them to earldoms; and the lords, akin to the royal family, by his conferring on some of them the title of duke, which had not before been introduced into England. Whilst, to stimulate all the gentlemen in his army to feats of bravery, English and foreigners alike, the king invented a new kind of knighthood; the celebrated order of the garter. The persons admitted into this order became members of a noble brotherhood, among whom Edward was chief. And the simple device of a blue garter with a legend, worn under the knee, served to mark the wearer as one whom the king delighted to honour.

This institution was worthy of one so *wise in his generation*, among *the children of this world*, as King Edward. For, as the order does not descend, like peerage, from father to son, it enables the sovereign to hold out to the greatest of his nobles a coveted honour, as an inducement to serve him. The reward imposes no burden on the nation; and no expense upon the crown. And if a king is tempted to bestow the garter on unworthy flatterers, he knows that the order will proportionably fall in repute; and consequently the reward in value. Amongst those idle stories, however, which the Romish church encouraged its followers to receive with no less implicit faith than the Scriptures, was the story of a Christian knight, named George, vanquishing a dragon. Even King Edward was ignorant enough to fancy, that this personage guarded England; much as the lesser gods of the still older Roman idolaters were supposed to watch over and protect a particular country. Hence the Almighty was insulted by prayers and exclamations, calling in vain for his aid, on God and St. George to protect the knights of the garter. And it is to be regretted,

that allusions to so idle a tale, and so profane a cry, are still mixed up with the ceremonies which confer this honour on modern sovereigns and English statesmen.

But after all his well-laid schemes of policy, his waste of the lives and property of his subjects, his labours, and his victories, Edward could not but perceive, that he had grasped at what was beyond his reach. Before renewing, therefore, his attacks on France, he offered to resign his claim to the French crown, provided King John, who had now succeeded his father Philip, would allow him to hold Aquitaine and his other French possessions, as an independent kingdom; owing, henceforward, no vassalage to the sovereigns of France. The Duke of Lancaster and Lord Guy de Bryan were sent over with these proposals, which were favourably received by John, whose love of splendour left him nothing to spare for the expenses of war. But the French nobility declared, they would not suffer their sovereign to give up part of his kingdom, at Edward's demand, as though they were incapable of defending it.

Within six years, therefore, from the cessation of the plague, the surviving male population of England was obliged, or tempted, to supply the king again with armies of such a size, as no sovereign would now think of requiring, for foreign service, from five times his number of subjects. And the multitude of human beings, who thus submitted to act at his discretion, were led on to deeds of hideous cruelty. In October, 1355, the Black Prince marched from Bourdeaux, at the head of 60,000 men. This force he divided into several battalions, and bade them advance at such distances from each other, on entering France, that their ravages might extend to every portion of the country between their lines of march. It became his boast, that he *had thus managed to reduce to ashes, in seven*

eks, five hundred cities, towns, and villages, in a populous district, whose inhabitants made no resistance to his arms, and where war had not been felt a hundred years. The prince knew not, or cared not, that the people whose prosperity he had witnessed, and been permitted to turn into weeping and mourning, were the children of those who had slaughtered the Albigenses*, for worshipping God in truth; who occupied their lands, dwelt in their houses, and had grown wealthy on their spoil.

About the same time his father inflicted the like misery, though on a smaller scale, upon the French province adjoining Calais; till he was Nov. 1355. called back to England, to repel a Scotch invasion.

On reaching the borders of Scotland, Edward met with Baliol at Roxburgh: and they there agreed on the sale and purchase of that kingdom; as if it, and the nation, had been no less transferable than an estate and the cattle thereon. For 4,000*l.*, and an annuity of 5,000*l.* more, Baliol, grown old and childless, sold his title to Edward; and the latter marched on, through the Lothians, Jan. 1356. with the royal banner of Scotland displayed before him. The king had still to learn the impolicy of his barbarous mode of warfare. Meeting no enemy, he divided his army into small bodies, who pillaged and burnt every farm house, village, and town within twenty miles of the coast. His fleet had been ordered to meet him in Leith harbour, with a supply of provisions; but a strong northerly wind prevented its arriving. And the king, stopped in his advance by the Frith, was, as usual, compelled to retreat, from the impracticability of remaining where his own troops had destroyed both food and shelter. The fires they had lighted were not soon forgotten. Long after this invasion, the Scotch were wont to

* See Vol. I. p. 369, and Vol. II. p. 48.

stimulate each other to revenge this devastation on the English, with cries of "Remember the 1st of Candlemas!"

Another summer came, and the Black Prince again quitted Bourdeaux. It should seem, that the greater part of his army had left him, to carry off the spoil of the last campaign. For he was attended by but 12,000 men. Yet, marching northward than before, he repeated the same exploits in the beautiful province of Touraine, advancing with this small force, as though France had indeed neither king nor nobles to defend the unarmed peasantry from the robber. John, however, had ordered his vassals to meet him, in France at Chartres; and was preparing to cut off the retreat of the English. The prince had taken all precautions to procure intelligence; yet some false reports of his adversary's movements had reached him, and he had begun his march back; when he unexpectedly found, that the royal army of France was at least seven times as numerous as his own, and already between him and Bourdeaux, and close at hand.

King John, his four sons, and his brother Duke of Orleans, with the flower of the nobility of France, were in the field on Sunday morning,

Sept. 18, 1356. preparing to attack the English, whose destruction seemed inevitable. On the other

hand, the Black Prince, who showed a true sense of the danger by speaking reverently of the power of God to help, yet allowed no words to pass from his mouth, that were not encouraging to those around him; and by the advice of the Lords Clifford and Audley, the most prudent steps were taken for the defence of the position occupied by his troops.

At the king of France's bidding, Eustace de Beaumont advanced to examine this position. On coming back he reported to John that the prince's army was only approachable by a lane, along which

scarcely four men at arms could advance abreast ; that behind the hedges of this lane lay numbers of English bowmen, and that if any of his knights should succeed in reaching the end of it without falling by their arrows, he would find the great body of bowmen in his front, behind whom were the men at arms, all dismounted, and posted on the slope of a hill among vines and bushes ; through which it would be impossible to charge them on horseback. Still, trusting in his great superiority of numbers, the king was about to commence the attack, when the pope's legate, Cardinal Talleyrand de Perigord, rode up from the neighbouring town of Poitiers, and besought John, in the name of God, to desist, and give him time to speak with the prince. "The English," said he, "are but a handful ; they cannot escape from you : and how much better will it be if I can bring them to such terms as you desire, without risking the lives of so many noble gentlemen as are with you." The king assented,—and the cardinal, anxious to effect his charitable object, rode straightway to the prince, who received him courteously, and to whom he said, "Fair son, if you are well informed of the strength of the king's army you cannot but be willing that I should bring about some agreement between you." "If our honour be but saved," replied the prince, "I would willingly come to any reasonable terms."

Thus authorized to mediate, the cardinal passed the day in going from one to the other, whilst the soldiers rested on their arms, and a tent was pitched for the king of France on the spot where he stood. Finding himself, however, unable to prevent a battle, the cardinal returned in sorrow at evening to Poitiers. Yet he would reflect with pleasure on having been permitted to conduct himself in a manner so becoming one who had received *the ministry of reconciliation* *. And thus much at least had

been gained by his benevolent interference, the Lord's day, the sacred and appointed type of holy rest of heaven, passed without being profaned by deeds of strife and blood.

In the mean while the Black Prince had strengthened his position by cutting trench and casting up mounds, though the delay had, in all respects, been more injurious to him than to the French; for the English had gone on, upon the moment of their halt, making a desert of the country they reached, in the expectation of satisfying their next day's wants by fresh pillage; and had, therefore, this day wanted bread.

But as the sins of the Canaanitish nations prevented their being used as the scourge which the Almighty thought fit to chastise the rest of his chosen people, so neither did the end for which the English army had been guilty, nor its being employed to execute his righteous judgments upon France. The Apostle heard a voice proclaim in heaven, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets; and thou hast given them to drink.** It was of them who had the mark of the prophesied beast, and worshipped his image; the angel spake as murderers of saints, and therefore, condemned to have the *springs and fountains* whereof they drank, polluted with blood † the prophesied beast was the Romish Church: the nations of Europe then bore its mark, and worshipped the image it had set up. But the monarchs had united themselves more closely to the popes, especially of late, than any other generation; their call the nation had poured out the blood of saints and holy preachers like water on the ground. And this generation had consented to the d

* Rev. xvi. 5, 6.

† Ibid. 2.

‡ Ibid.

ir fathers, suffering pious men amongst the clergy
e burned to death for testifying against the ini-
ty of their brethren; and now the streams and
ers of France had been, and were still to be, red-
ed with the blood of its people and nobles.

On Monday morning the battle of Poitiers be-
1. The French nobility rushed after each other
ng the guarded lane, where many fell pierced by
bowmen's arrows; and the horses of the others
ng made ungovernable from pain and terror,
ir riders were jostled together or thrown to the
md, in which defenceless state they were slain
he combatants on foot, whom the prince had
gled with the bowmen. Of the two French
hals, who had led this attack, one was in a few
ites a prisoner, the other killed. The lane was
ked up with the dying and the dead. Those
hats who were to have followed up the charge
e first, seeing this gallant company so soon
ring in blood, first hesitated; then retired; and
presently seen flying back to the main body.

ranks which received them thought they
surely pursued. A body of six hundred Eng-
as unexpectedly perceived crossing a hill to
the left flank of the French. The dismounted
its, in the rear of John's army, ran from their
rs to secure their horses. And at the same
the lords to whose care the king had especially
mended his three eldest sons, thinking it safest
move them from the field, bade 800 lancers
and escort them to Chauvigny.

these things had, to the great mass of the
the appearance of defeat, and brought to their
nbrance how the English had conquered, not-
standing their inferior numbers, at Cressy. And
who ruleth the hearts of men, has brought to
before, when he would that the few should
the victory, so now *there was a trembling in*
lost; and behold, the multitude melted away,

and they went on beating down one another *. Then the English charged on the rear of the flying ; and wearied themselves with almost unresisted slaughter, and made prisoners whom they chose. Still the king was tempted, by his courage and pride, to remain in the field, combating on foot, when success was hopeless. So deserted was he, that the numbers were now overpoweringly against him ; and of the great lords, whose loyalty made them rally the closer round him in this hour of danger, one was cut down every moment. At length a knight of St. Omer, who had fled from justice to England, being a large strong man forced his way through the other combatants, and called to him, " Sire, Sire, surrender yourself !" His true French accent caught the king's ear. " To whom am I to surrender ? " said he. " To whom ? Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales ? Let me see and speak with him. " " Sire," replied the knight, " he is not here. But surrender to me ; and I will conduct you to him. " " Who are you ? " said the king, " Sire, I am Denis de Morbeque ; a knight of Artois, in the King of England's service. " The king then reached out to him his right glove ; saying, " I put myself in your hands. " A number of English and Gascon knights, however, soon hurried him away from Morbeque ; and his person was again endangered, by the blows struck between men heated with angry passions, and disputing whose was the right to their important prisoner. " Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the king, " lead me courteously to the prince, my cousin ; and quarrel no more about my capture ; for I am great enough to make you all rich. " These words quieted them for a few moments ; but before they could advance a yard, they were again in fierce dispute. In the mean while, the Black Prince had requested the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cobham to ride forward,

I learn whether the King of France was dead, or prisoner, as every one said, that he certainly had never quitted the field. The clamour and violent action of a throng, whose struggles allowed them to come on but slowly, soon caught the attention of these lords; and spurring up their horses to the point, they demanded "What is the matter?" "Here is the King of France," they were answered, "and each of these knights and esquires will have him for his own prisoner." On this the two noblemen bade every one, in the prince's name, stand back, under peril of their life; and then, dismounting, made a obeisance to the king; whom they respectfully conducted to a tent, which the prince's servants had just pitched for their master's use.

The battle had begun at break of day; it was ended at noon; and the English had little more to do, during the remaining hours of light, than gather spoil from the bodies of the dead, from the persons of their captives, and from tents and baggage of the sumptuous princes and lords of France. But when they had collected their prisoners together, from the various quarters of the field, they formed a body twice as numerous as the captors. This occasioned some hesitation, as to what it were best to do with them. As, however, by the rules of chivalry, each individual was at liberty to do what he would, with those prisoners who had surrendered himself, the difficulty was soon got over; for the greater number of the men-at-arms were allowed to depart immediately to their own homes, on the promise of each, that he would come to Bourdeaux at Christmas, and bring his captor the sum agreed upon for his redemption. Their word was better than their bond; because the penalty for breaking their bond would not have been easily recovered, when courts of justice had but little power over the upper classes; whereas the known consequences of breaking their word, were such as the boldest of

them would not dare to face ; for it would have posed him to such continual and painful insult must have made his life a burden.

They are said to have obtained easy terms cause the spirits of the English were so elated their victory, that all were in too joyous a humour to think of driving a hard bargain with their tives. The effect was good. But how widely parted must the human heart be, from that likeness to God in which it was first created *, to have become capable of joyous feelings, whilst there before the conquerors, the bleeding and mutilated corpses of fourteen hundred of their friends, few hours ago exulting in health and strength of eleven thousand fellow-creatures, whom it would be most unjust to call their enemies, for standing up to defend their own country !

But however liberally the English gentlemen might behave to the prisoners of their own country, the Black Prince outshone them all, by the respectful courtesy of his demeanour to his royal captive. When first introduced, by the lords Warwick and Cobham, into his tent, the prince humbly bowed before him ; and, ordering a cup of spiced wine to be brought, presented it, with his own hands, to the king. And in the evening, when supper was prepared, the prince had a raised table set apart for the French monarch, his son Philip, the Lord of Bourbon, ancestor of the present royal family of France, and a few others of his most distinguished prisoners. Before this table he waited, in presenting the king himself ; and declining, though pressed, to take his seat with them. “ Please me freely, dear Sire,” said he, “ though God has consented to your wishes this day. Be sure your lord and father will shew you all honour and friendship, and will agree with you on such reasons

* See Gen. i. 26.

us, that you may ever be friends, henceforth. I speak it not to flatter you, dear sire; but all knights of our party, who have witnessed what been done on both sides, agree in assigning you prize, for your bravery shewn this day." These kind words were followed by a general murmur amongst the Frenchmen present; who said to each other, that if the prince persevered through life as he had begun, he would indeed be truly noble.

In this part of the Black Prince's conduct, we see, perhaps, the most favourable example that can be produced of the beneficial effects of chivalry. By its beneficial effects, nothing more can properly be understood, than that the false principles, which its rules were built, did not go so far as to reverse all that the Scriptures teach. And that, producing an intense thirst for praise, it set before such persons as the Black Prince, a motive for doing those few things, which it required in common with the word of God, more powerful than the *love of Christ* in *constraining* * them. The most highly-esteemed warrior amongst the Romans, the bravest and greatest of the heathen nations, would have been as mean and cruel enough to have murdered such a captive, as king John, after his surrender †. But though the Black Prince and his companions had no confused notions of religion, they had learned it to look upon the nations of Christendom, at least, as members of one great family. In addition to this, the neglected Scriptures might have taught them, that they were required to *love the brother* ‡. But a distinct recollection had come down, to the origin of chivalry, that the nobles throughout Europe were of the race of its conquerors; and their vassals, of the conquered. Personages of high rank, therefore, fondly cherished the re-

* 2 Cor. v. 14.

† See vol. I. p. 33.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 17.

flection, that the same blood flowed in the veins of every noble ; but thought that, when different nations were considered as making up one vast family, the nobility must be looked up to as the masters of this family ; the peasantry might be treated as its slaves. It followed that the noble and simple of the same nation would be held to be far more widely separated, whilst this feeling prevailed, than men of different nations, but of the same rank. Thus did the prejudices encouraged by chivalry induce the nobles, of even hostile countries, to behave to each other as men who were conscious that the honour or dishonour, which either received, must tend to the raising or lowering of the dignity of their own order, in the eyes of mankind ; and would thus turn back upon themselves. But the knight, whom such motives urged to behave with a frank, and courteous demeanour towards all gentlemen, did not feel it necessary to abstain, with the care of a plain honest man, from acts of injustice toward them ; and would have abhorred the thought of conducting himself towards any man living, in the spirit of that Christian love which *beareth all things* *.

If the desire to obey GOD, instead of the thirst for admiration, had been the ruling motive of the Black Prince's conduct, he would have attended to the command *thou shalt not covet* ; and would have allowed king John to rule over France undisturbed.

The influence of chivalry did little for the happiness of that monarch, by inducing the Prince to behave with such courtesy to him, when a prisoner ; for the same influence had first urged on the king of England and his warlike son to their attack upon his peace ; and had blinded them to the guilt of it. The Scriptures say, as expressly as the laws of chivalry, *Honour the king* †. But they would farther have taught the conqueror of Poitiers, that lip ho-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

† 1 Pet. ii. 17.

our is not *the fulfilling of the law*. And he might so have seen in them, that *Honour all men* * is a command, urged at the same moment, and with the same forcible brevity. Whereas, that the poor and humble were held by him in no more honour than *the beasts which perish*; and that the influence of chivalry did but little, indeed, for the happiness of the great body of the people, is but too plain. The black Prince, and his father, have each been called the Mirror of Knighthood; and yet we have seen them uniformly conducting their warfare with suchanton indifference to the extreme misery they inflicted on the unarmed and defenceless, that the imputation of not being careful to abstain from thus needlessly adding to the evils of war is sufficient to make the name of a modern conqueror odious.

The king of France, too, was not inferior to either of his renowned opponents, in his zeal to be thought a true knight. We shall see him choosing to quit his throne for captivity in a foreign land, rather than break his word given to an enemy. Indeed it was his dread of the dishonour attached to the breach of an oath, that had kept him in the field, when success was hopeless, to be taken prisoner at Poitiers. For John had invented, and put himself at the head of the Order of the Star †, whose knights made swear, that, if forced to give way in battle, no danger should drive them beyond so many roods from the spot where they first met their foe. When the day of trial came, the coward still fled; whilst the bravest, the flower of his nobility, who might have rallied the flying army, or covered its retreat, laid, for their foolish oath's sake, to perish, or become captives. Yet this worshipper of knightly

* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

† This Order was so called from a star which the knights wore on the front of their mantles. And they held their feasts in a royal palace standing near what has, thence, been named the *Barriere de l'Etoile*; one of the outlets of Paris.

honour was addicted to defrauding his subjects, after the example of his father Philip, and to a still greater extent; apparently, without scruple, and without shame. In the year preceding the late battle, king John had issued no less than eighteen royal orders; making so many changes in the rate at which the coinage of the country was to pass current. By these orders, the same coin was to be valued at but four shillings, when brought by the people, in payment of taxes; at 17s. 4d. when he paid his own debts; and again at 4s. 6d. when the nation had consented to raise five millions of livres, to meet the wants of his government. Another of his orders, made while the last-mentioned valuation of the coin continued in force, forbade the payment of any sums due from the crown, for some months to come; and informed his officers, that, if he should so far yield to the importunity of any creditor, or other person, as to sign the usual document, requiring them to pay that individual a certain sum immediately, they were to take for granted he had not, really, any such intention; and that they must be answerable, out of their own private property, if they paid a single livre to the bearer of any promissory note under his hand. This last order is a singular instance of a monarch's bidding his public servants be prepared to expect acts of dishonesty from him. But whilst it might ruin such as had trusted his promises, the orders affecting the nominal value of the coin not only defrauded, both those who had to receive, and those who had to pay money into his treasury, but destroyed all credit, and, therefore, almost all commerce, throughout his kingdom. If any man laid up money to pay his taxes, or his rent, he was liable to be told, when the day of payment came, that the money he brought with him was only worth a quarter of the sum it had been reckoned at, when he received it in payment for his cattle, or his corn. If *any man* had a debtor; he could not foresee what

the law would allow him to claim when the debt should become due. If any man borrowed ; he could not foresee how much he would be obliged to repay.

Thus was king Edward only one of the instruments for afflicting unhappy France. Its chivalrous monarch had been another. And now, when John was carried away a captive to England, the right to govern his kingdom was claimed by the Dauphin * ; but the people felt no confidence in him ; and were disposed to obey rather a Committee of State, under the influence of Stephen Marcel, mayor of Paris ; or to be misled by the smooth speeches of Charles, king of Navarre, a noble of the blood royal of France, already distinguished by the surname of Charles the Bad. Hence there was no power, in any of their governors ; save, to do ill, and harass the nation by their struggles for superiority. Finding this to be the case, the unemployed men-at-arms, and disbanded soldiers, both of the French and English armies, joined in forming hosts of robbers ; who traversed and ransacked the country with impunity. Whilst the landed proprietors, who had pledged themselves to bring their ransoms to Bourdeaux, knew not how to raise the promised sums ; but by seizing and selling the stock, the furniture, and even the implements of husbandry, from their tenants' farms ; which they, therefore, made no hesitation of doing, to escape, forsooth, the imputation of being dishonourable. Thus oppressed on every side, the peasantry were driven to madness ; and began, in their turn, a fright- 1357. ful war, which spread from villages to towns ; with the purpose of hunting down all the nobility, to slay them, their wives and their children. And this rebellion was not put a stop to by soothing the cries

* So the eldest sons of the kings of France were thenceforward named, from the province of Dauphiny ; which had been purchased of its last sovereign, who bore the same title, by king Philip, in 1349.

of the injured, by promising justice and protection for the future, and inflicting punishment on the foremost in atrocity; but by more horrors, and deeper guilt; the French nobles, as soon as they could unite in any numbers, taking advantage of the superiority which their coats of mail and armour gave them, to attack and slaughter the naked populace by tens of thousands.

Yet let none think of charging the Lord of all the earth with undue severity. He had given this king, these nobles, and this people His holy Word; that they searching into it, to learn, and to obey the commands of their Creator, and their Redeemer, might *beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks* *; and live on the fertile soil, and under the fair climate of France; each eating of the fruit of his own fig-tree and vine, in righteousness and peace.

By bringing a company of faithful teachers into their land, and planting the Scriptural Church of the Albigenses within its borders, the Almighty had bestowed, on the French † nation, advantages which He had thought fit to withhold, for a time, from most other nations. But they had stopped their ears against His gracious and special calls, and had taken and killed His servants, who would have instructed them in that *godliness which hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come* †. Wherefore it was most just, that they should be made to feel the depth of the misery which would cover the whole earth, if God *gave up all people unto their own heart's lusts* §, and to the *wars and fightings* which are the natural fruits of those *lusts* †.

Whilst France had been thus weakened by accumulated calamities, the disposable resources of England, for purposes of war, had been rapidly

* Isaiah iii. 4.

† 1 Tim. iv. 8.

† Vol. I. p. 368, 369.

§ Ps. lxxxi. 12.

¶ Jam. iv. 1.

enting. The plague had both diminished the demand for corn, and increased the price of the seed needed for its cultivation ; so that the farmer was doubly tempted to let his arable land become pastures and walks. The number lost by disease among sheep was, therefore, quickly more than replaced ; and as their produce also was less wanted for home wear, it was sent abroad to a greater amount than ever. Thus the sheep skins, wool, and woollen manufactures entered at the Custom-House for exportation, in 1354, were valued at 784,000*l*. Of this sum the king had received 205,000*l*. ; duties levied at the rate of somewhat above 50 per cent on the raw articles, and one upon the manufactures. On the other hand, all the imports of every kind, entered on the same record, amounted to 97,000*l*. ; paying the king only 1,450*l* *. A country which sold so much more than it bought, was capable of affording its monarch large sums to spend abroad. And, by covering the country with sheep-farms, instead of arable, the landed proprietors were also enabled to spare a large proportion of

The wool exported was 31,650 sacks, valued at 15*l*. per sack before the duty was added. Wool-fells, 3036 cwt. valued at 5*l*. the cwt. Pieces of coarse woollen cloth, of home manufacture, at 5*l*. the piece. Worsted at 2*l*. the piece.

The imports registered are, 1830 pieces of fine cloth, at 15*l*. the piece ; also 1830 tons of wine, at 5*l*. the ton ; 397 cwt. of wool, at 5*l*. the cwt. ; linen cloth, mercery, grocery and other goods, to the value of 57,000*l*.

Reducing these sums to modern money, they are still comparable as equal in weight to twice and a half the same nominal value of our latest coinage. King Edward had just issued the great groats ; 40 of which weighed as much as 33 modern pence. It has been observed that, hitherto, the coins ordinarily current were the penny, sometimes called a *sterling*, and its divisions. These groats, therefore, being little less than shillings in weight, and so thin as to present more than to the eye, were the largest coins the people had seen ; and, on that account, called grosses, or grossets ; from which, by a gradual change, came the word *groats*.

its reduced population, to follow the king's summons to arms. Whilst the reduction of their rents, and the presumed certainty of finding both wealth and honour in his service, made the whole body of the gentry ready to quit their homes, to fight under the victorious banners of Edward III. By bargaining with David, and his subjects, for that monarch's redemption from captivity, the king farther proposed to make Scotland aid him, in his wars, with a larger supply of money, than the entire conquest of that country would have brought into his treasury. He

Nov. accordingly had king David conveyed to Ber-
wick, and there set at liberty; on the condi-
1357. tion of paying him 16,500*l.* a year, for the next ten years; and of abstaining from all hostility, or offensive alliances against England, during the same period. To make these terms as sure as possible, king David was pledged to return into captivity if they were not duly fulfilled. The Scotch prelates bound themselves to excommunicate him, if he failed so to do. Twenty of the greatest nobles of Scotland, agreed that three of their number should always reside at the English court as hostages, till it was paid. And the royal boroughs, and chief merchants gave their bonds for the payment of the money—all farther adding a solemn engagement, under their hands and seals, not to accept from the pope any permission to deal falsely. But though the Scotch had consented to redeem their king at this price, the annual demand proved to be more than their government could go on raising, from year to year, for transmission to England. Hence their payments fell short in the second year; and king Edward, after much dispute, was fain to consent that the yearly charge should be diminished to 6,500*l.*; which sum they continued paying, even after David's death, till the amount originally agreed upon had been cleared off.

With the like policy, the king of England next made a harder bargain than could be fulfilled, with his other royal captive, John; who consented to give up to him, in full and independent sovereignty, all the provinces once subject to Henry II., and farther engaged to pay 1,500,000*l.* for his own ransom. But when this agreement between the two monarchs was sent over to France, the dauphin called the states of the realm together, May, 1359. and they declared that they would rather bear the continuance of their present misery, than consent to have the kingdom thus divided. John attributed their decision to the treacherous enmity of the king of Navarre; but Edward suspected John himself of having suggested it, underhand. To dispose him, therefore, to make greater sacrifices for the recovery of his freedom, the king of France was no longer suffered to share the amusements of the court in London and at Windsor; but was removed to Hertford Castle, and then to the more dreary and remote castle of Somerton, under the edge of Lincoln Heath; there to be strictly guarded by the lords Deyncourt and Blankney.

When the king of England found that the French would not consent to purchase their sovereign's liberty at so extravagant a price, he resolved to compel them to submission by force of arms. And no sooner had he proclaimed his intention of again invading France, than crowds of foreign knights drew towards Calais, from Flanders, Brabant, and Germany, to join his standard; that they might gather their fill of plunder. But it was Edward's appointed task to be the scourge, yet not the conqueror of France. When he was the weaker the Lord had made *those who were courageous among the mighty to flee away* * before him. But

* Amos ii. 16.

now that his power was every way increased, and that of the French broken down, so that conquest seemed easy, he gained nothing by entering
Oct. 29, 1359. France with a more formidable armament than had ever before marched under his command. For though he took with him a train of 5000 carts, to convey provisions from the stores in which he might find them, and handmills to grind the corn, and even nets to fish the ponds and rivers; and though after insulting the gates of Paris, he penetrated Burgundy unopposed; he found that his past cruelties had taught the people, that their lives and property could only be saved, by retiring into the fortified towns, and by resolutely defending them till his army had moved past. And if he halted his forces, to undertake the siege of any town important enough to tempt him to such a measure, his old sin became his punishment. For the desolation which he had made, and continued to make, soon starved his army out of its cantonments, and obliged him to move off in search of food. His policy too made him reflect with vexation, on the heavy expence of paying so numerous an army. When he was in this temper, his troops were assailed, near the village of Bretigny, by a thunder-storm, in which the fire of the lightning mingled with hail, in such weighty masses, that it smote even men and horses to the ground. In the moment of terror, the king looked towards what was called the Church of *Our Lady of Chartres*; and swore a vow to the Virgin, that, if he might but be saved, he would grant peace to France. The unhappy monarch knew not, that the God whose thunders thus terrified him, has declared Himself to be jealous of His own honour; and when He proclaims to man, that He can be at once *a just God and a Saviour*, He adds, *there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved: for I am God, and none*

*I have sworn by Myself, that unto Me, every
shall bow, every tongue shall swear*.*

Edward, however, was faithful to his vow ; and by peace of Bretigny, he consented to entitle himself longer King of France : to leave out Nor- May 8,
dy, Bretagne, Anjou and Touraine from the 1360.

ions which he had lately required : and to ac-
400,000*l.* less than his former demand, for the

om of king John. To the remaining conditions
the treaty which they had before refused, the
phin, and his counsellors, felt it necessary to as-

. And it was further agreed, that Edward
at fix on a certain number of the princes and
es of France, whom he would have as hostages
he fulfilment of every thing stipulated ; and that
John should be set free as soon as his son should
paid 250,000*l.* into the English treasury. This

ey, however, the dauphin would have been un-
to procure, within the expected time, from the

riary resources of the state. But whilst the

dom of France was so impoverished that its

arch, on his return, was reduced to paying the

nces of his household with leather money, hav-

only a nail of silver run through its centre, an

an duke, whose family had usurped the sove-

nty of Lombardy, was found able and willing to

300,000*l.* for the honour of having an infant

ghter of king John betrothed to his son †.

the price for which he had sold his sister, the

ent dauphin purchased his father's freedom.

mn oaths were then taken, by the two sovereigns

by their chief nobility. The duke of Orleans,

aer of the French king ; the dukes of Anjou, and

saiah xlv. 21. 23.

his same person, John Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan,

years after proposed to give 200,000*l.* as the dowry of his

ster, Violante, on her marriage with king Edward's son,

d, duke of Clarence. He had also paid the French govern-

300,000*l.* more for an earldom, to be conferred on his son.

Berry, his sons ; the duke of Bourbon ; and several other persons of consequence, were sent into Calais as hostages. And king Edward there parted
 Oct. 25, 1360. from his royal captive, with much ceremonious civility, and many professions of mutual friendship.

Yet did not the wrath of God cease to be poured out upon this sinful generation. The system of chivalry, encouraged as it had been by Edward and John, had made all the gentry of France into men-at-arms. And now when neither monarch chose to keep them any longer in his pay, the wants or the restlessness of numbers of unprincipled knights, adventurers from all countries, made them join in forming *companies*, many thousand strong, to live by desolating the finest provinces of France. The leader of one of these mighty hordes of robbers, was called, in derision of sacred names, the Arch-priest. Another horde under the command of Sir John Hawkwood an Englishman, was named *the White Company* ; because it profaned the emblem of the sufferings of the Prince of Peace, by going forth to commit the most atrocious crimes, with a white cross, as the mark by which each chivalrous robber was to know his brother.

The plague too was again let loose upon unhappy France ; and again passed into England ; where the filthy habits, and unwholesome salt diet of our forefathers, added to its destructive powers. So
 June 24 & 25, 1361. that in two days it slew 1,200 persons, in London alone. When this visitation had past away, Archbishop Islip circulated an order to prevent the surviving curates, or rather vicars, from taking advantage of the thinning of their numbers, to ask for higher salaries. He insisted, that no one should receive more than 8*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* for officiating throughout the year in any church ; which only deserves notice for the remark of the *monkish* writer who records the fact, that this order

“compelled many to turn thieves.” Yet assuredly, *no temptation had taken them, but such as is common to man.* And had these wretched priests been at all acquainted with the ways of the Lord, they would have found that *God is faithful, who will not suffer those who trust in Him to be tempted above that they are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape* *.

The light, however, was about to dawn again on England. Had Edward, and the high-spirited barons who shared his councils, been told that the chains which bound them should ere long be broken, they would have replied with scorn, *We were never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou, ye shall be made free* †? But though unconscious of the mercy which guided their steps, and of the end to which those steps would lead, they were drawn into a succession of measures admirably suited to prepare the nation for receiving the inestimable blessing promised by our Lord, when he said, *ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* ‡.

It is evident that the people could not be brought to know the truth, till some one should teach them the words of truth in a language which they understood. But ever since the conquest, the language spoken by the common people had been neglected by their superiors; as barbarous in itself, and likely soon to pass entirely out of use. And though it had, in reality, been gradually enriched by the introduction of new names for things, learnt from their masters, or from Italian priests, still studious men, finding nothing to read in English, neglected it for foreign tongues; and so continued the evil, by leaving nothing in English to be read. Hence, though the Lord had never suffered the light to be utterly extinguished, but had permitted Anselm, and Brad-

* 1 Cor. x. 13.

† John viii. 33.

‡ John viii. 32.

wardine, and doubtless many others unknown to fame, to see so far as might lead to the saving of their own souls, and the edifying such of their brethren, among the clergy, as earnestly sought to know His will; yet, since these good men wrote only in Latin, and the Scriptures used in the church were read in Latin, the great body of the nation was nothing profited by what was written, or read. And it would soon have become difficult to diffuse instruction, through so neglected a tongue. For as there was no written standard, whereby the natives of different counties might be kept to one form of speech, and one manner of spelling; and as there was very little intercourse between remote districts, the old Saxon received different changes in different parts of the country; and the ancient variety in the pronunciation of different Saxon tribes increased, rather than diminished; the very few who could write, spelling their words by ear, and not by rule. Thus, instead of growing up into one language, the English tongue seemed likely to be quickly separated into distinct dialects, unintelligible beyond those parts of the island in which each might prevail. John de Trevisa, a native of Cornwall, but Vicar of Berkley in Gloucestershire, who wrote several books in English a few years later, was struck with this; and from an older writer, who composed in Latin, he translated the following remarks upon it: which may serve at once to confirm what has been said, and for a specimen of English, on its first appearance as a written tongue. “Hit semeth a grete wonder,” says he, “how Englyschmen have so grete dyversyte in her owin langage in sowne and in spekyin of it, which is all in oon ilonde. Some usith straunge wlaffing, chytryng, harryng, garryng, and grysbyting. This apairyng of the birthe tonge is bicause of twey thinges: oon is for children in scole, agens the usage and maner of alle othre natiouns, beth compelled for to leve her owin langage, and for to constrewe her

essons a Frenshe. Also Englyschmen had from the beginnyng thre maner speche, southren, northren, and myddell speche, as thei come of the thre maner peple of Germania. The langages of the Northumbres, and specyally at Yorke, is so sharpe, dytting, frotyng, and unshape, that we southren men maye unneth understonde."

It was, therefore, most seasonably brought about that parliament should pass an act, requiring all pleaders in courts of law to use the English, or vulgar tongue, henceforward in their pleadings. The parliament had no thought of furthering the cause of true religion by this law. But the king and his nobles, as it is stated in the body of the act, had been struck with the disadvantage under which the natives of this island laboured, when compared with the king's subjects abroad; in having their causes conducted in a language which they did not understand. Yet the remedy by no means extended far enough for the end proposed; namely, that the laws of the realm should be known to all persons, who ought to regulate their conduct thereby. For even this act was not drawn up in English, but in French, as all acts of parliament continued to be for above an hundred years more. But it immediately gave the lawyers occasion to cultivate the English language; and their practice and influence as quickly raised it in importance. The desire of parents to have their children suitably trained for following the lucrative profession of the law, had induced most schoolmasters to employ English instead of French, in giving the sense of Latin before Trevisa wrote. And studious men no longer regarded it as useless to write their thoughts in a language which was soon found to be capable of expressing very subtle distinctions. Native poets, indeed, had composed chronicles and tales in English verse, in every stage of the progress of our language from the Saxon; but their works have been

A.D.
1362.

forgotten for ages, except by curious inquirers after antiquities. The oldest poet in English, whose works continue to be reprinted, and read, is Chaucer; and within twenty years from the passing of the above act, he had composed poems, which instantly became so popular, as to bring the language into favour with the witty, the courtly, and the gay. Unhappily for the author, his poems display the picture of a mind which had little of that *wisdom from above*, whose *first* mark is that it is *pure**. But though the *communications* which *proceeded* from his pen were far from being *good to the use of edifying*, they were not without another important use. For, by his exposure and open ridicule of the vices of monks and friars, he essentially contributed to destroy that blind deference for the priesthood, which had made men shrink from examining their doctrines.

But the parliament was led to take the most direct steps for preparing the minds of men to shake off the papal yoke, by the infatuated conduct of the popes themselves. In despite of the laws lately passed †, the pope continued to give away almost every bishopric, and great numbers of other benefices, without paying any attention to the rights of the lawful electors, or patrons. And though his fear of the king's resolute temper made him careful not to affront that monarch, by presenting bishoprics to persons whom Edward disliked, the pope showed his contempt for the indignation of the English nobility, by bestowing other rich benefices on foreigners attached to his own court; and his unacquaintance with the fear of God, by trusting the care of souls to persons, of whom he knew that they intended to neglect their charge.

As if he were overruled, for the express purpose of shewing mankind how little good could be ex-

* James iii. 17.

† See p. 225.

pected, from his usurped authority over the churches of Europe, the pope announced his fixed resolution to put an end to the abuse of pluralities. When his decree came forth, however, it only declared, that a rectory, with four prebends, should be ^{A.D. 1368.} deemed sufficient for one clergyman. But three years later, King Edward caused fresh inquiries to be made respecting this same abuse, and it was then found that the pope, by dispensations with *non obstante* clauses *, had enabled some priests to hold as many as twenty benefices together, in the face of his own decree. And after farther exertions on the part of both the king and parliament, to check the pope's devices for turning his influence to profit, it appears that the cardinals alone, most of whom had never visited England, not to speak of the preferment held by the inferior dignitaries of the papal court, were in possession † of the Deaneries of York, Sarum, and Lichfield; and of the Archdeaconries of Canterbury, York, Suffolk, Dorset, and Berkshire, besides Taunton and Wells, with eight English prebends. As to rectories, it was solemnly averred by the English parliament, in a petition presented to the king, that many of them had been taken possession of by foreigners, who were neither more nor less than 'the chamberlains, tailors, and shoemakers of the cardinals;' wherefore the said petition proceeded with a request, that the king would assent to an act for depriving these foreigners of their livings, 'that they might be bestowed on poor English scholars.'

It is not to be wondered that such contempt for common decency, in the disposal of his usurped patronage, provoked the parliament, notwithstanding that all its members were of the Romish church, to pass laws for the punishment of any natives who should abet the pope in such encroachments on the

* See p. 29.

† In 1374.

rights of patrons. And in the preamble to one of these bills, they did not hesitate to proclaim to the nation, that though they were willing to believe the pope to be deceived, by the false suggestions of others, yet the consequences of his proceedings were, that the 'treasures of the realm were carried off' by the foreigners whom he thrust into the English church; 'that benefices were wasted and destroyed; divine service, hospitality, alms-deeds, and other works of charity neglected; and the great men, commons, and subjects of the realm harassed and injured.'

This language might have taught the pope a useful lesson; if his eyes had not been blinded, that future generations might benefit thereby. Instead of becoming more cautious in his endeavours to enrich his own court at the expence of the English, he was so impolitic as to fix on the very next year for sending Edward notice, that should the yearly tribute, to which King John of England had pledged his successors, continue unpaid any longer, it was his intention to take steps for enforcing the payment. This threat the king laid before a parliament summoned for the purpose; and the nobles, prelates, and commons answered with one accord, 'that King John had no authority to bind the nation to any such subjection; and that he violated his coronation oath by the transaction.' To this resolution the nobles and commons added another, 'that in case the pope should attempt any thing by process, or in any other way, to constrain the king and his subjects to satisfy his claim in this matter, they would resist and withstand the same, with all their might.'

By heaping English preferment on foreigners, the pope could not fail to irritate the native clergy of England, as well as its nobles. For men who cared little about the welfare of the flocks, thus trusted to *strange* shepherds, were still capable of reflecting

t, but for the pope's unjust interference, the
ce would naturally have been their own portion.
t the pope had done other things besides this, to
the interests of the parochial clergy in opposition
the authority' assumed by the church of Rome.
in XXII. had established an oppressive claim to
full first year's produce, called *annates*, or *first-*
its, of every benefice after each new presenta-
n. And this again was viewed as a serious griev-
e by statesmen; who calculated what large sums
must draw out of the country, considering that the
nks, priests, and prelates had, by this time, got
s session of half the kingdom. But the popes now
ached very little value to the good will of the pa-
chial clergy; having deemed it politic to encourage
friars* at their expence. Here, however, the
pal policy defeated itself. For by licensing the
lars to receive the confessions of the parishioners
l other priests, and to teach in the universities,
ithout being subject to the rules or officers of those
niversities, the popes lost more influence than they
ained.

To explain what is meant by receiving confes-
ions, it must be mentioned, that the Romish church
ad long taught their followers to believe that a
ery essential part of religion consisted in every
ne's confessing to his priest all the transgressions,
en or unseen, for which he desired to be forgiven;
ith all the circumstances which led to, or accom-
panied them. It would have been vain for the church
to command men thus to expose their disgrace to
thers, had it not also taught them to believe, that
he sins, so confessed, were by this means blotted
out of the book of God's remembrance; as soon as
he offender had submitted to the penance, or pu-
ishment, which the priest might think fit to enjoin.
kill, however, every offender whose crimes were of

* See p. 32—34.

such a nature as to make him liable to be punished by the laws, or abhorred of men, would have been with the fear of Divine anger rather than tell priest what he had done; but that the church of Rome made it a law of the priesthood, and enforced that law by really dreadful punishments, that a priest should betray the secrets thus made known to him.

The belief in the importance of confession, which was called by that church a sacrament, took so firm hold of men's minds, that they died happy or unhappy, and were thought to be saved or lost, according as they had, or had not, an opportunity of making confession to some priest, and of receiving absolution from him, just before death. And the effect of this belief was most prejudicial to the people; but exceedingly favourable to the power of the priests. It was most prejudicial to the people, because whereas God has planted shame in the heart and made terror to follow guilt, in order to deter those from wickedness, whom *the love of Christ* does not *constrain* to obedience, the habit of going to a priest, and repeating before him all the details of guilt, must have rooted out the sense of shame, and the priest's declaration, that the sin was wiped away, as soon as his orders were complied with, removed the wholesome check of terror. But while under other systems, the influence of the priest would bear some proportion to the devotion of those whom he advised; under this, his influence increased with the crimes of the unhappy sinners, who desired his absolution, to prevent their consciences from testifying them; and found it needful to be humble before him, that he might not enjoin them too severe a penance. Still it must have been so far painful for any to meet in daily life the man who knew them to be far worse than they claimed to be thought of by the world, that most would rather confess their sins to a passing friar, whom they might never see again.

to their parish priest; if it might serve the same

So that by giving the friars authority to receive confessions, as they roamed over the country, popes deprived the priests of the main prop of their influence, and tempted both friars and priests to over the terms of penance, by way of underbidding each other in this sinful traffic for souls.

So much impolicy mixed up, at this period, with the crafty devices of the leaders of the church of Rome, especially in their conduct towards the humbler members of its priesthood, bespeaks most clearly the overruling influence of Him, who *taketh the wise in their own craftiness*, and by whom *the counsel of the froward is carried headlong* *, to bring about, to their own despite, His purposed mercies. By permitting the sins of the popes, and cardinals, and Romish prelates, to press heavily on the worldly interests of the inferior clergy, the old prejudices of the latter were shaken; and their many causes for dissatisfaction contributed to raise up, from among them, fit instruments for effecting a mighty change. Whilst the correction of the errors of the church, being thus demanded by its own members, was finally, in consequence, accomplished by its reformation; instead of needing its destruction.

The first person who endeavoured to rouse the people to throw off the yoke of popery, was a poor priest named John Ball. As early as the year in which parliament came to its vote for 1366.

resisting the pope's aggressions, if necessary, this person had drawn upon himself a rebuke from the Archbishop of Canterbury, by his freedom of speech. But when prohibited by the bishops from preaching in any church, he fearlessly harangued the people in the streets and market-places; and continuing this course for several years, he brought over great numbers to his opinions; till his increasing popularity

* Job v. 13.

alarmed the prelates, who, finding that he cared not for their excommunications, shut him up in prison. It is probable, however, that whilst Ball acted an useful part, in opening the eyes of the people to the gross vices of those blind guides whom they had been contented to follow, he was not capable of instructing them in spiritual things. Till some one should come forward from a class of society above that to which this needy priest belonged, and should communicate the knowledge of the truth by his preaching, it was scarcely possible for a poor man to get at the means of learning what was taught in the word of God. For even if he knew Latin, as Ball perhaps did, books were so dear in this age, when printing had not been invented, and copyists were few, that a Psalter seems to have been sold cheap which cost the wages of three months' daily labour. Of a Bible, fairly written in nine volumes, with notes, we are told that it cost £100; and this when wheat was but ten shillings a quarter.

The intrusion of the friars into the universities had the happy effect of rousing men more highly endowed; and of drawing them on, by their dislike of the manner in which the pope exercised his authority, to question, examine, and discard that authority. For the friars were disliked by the regular teachers of the universities, not only as rivals, who, having no other title to collect an audience, took more pains to acquire popularity with the young; but more especially because they so notoriously made it their aim to seduce every hopeful pupil to turn friar, that parents became afraid of sending their children to the places they haunted. Indeed the zeal of the friars to increase the importance of their order, by drawing numbers into it, was so little restrained by propriety, that they were guilty of inveigling children to bind themselves, without the consent of their parents, by vows which were but too likely to prove

the snares of death unto their souls. Parliament was slow in interfering to check this evil, and they did but little; only making it illegal for the friars to carry off and conceal, or administer the oath of their order to, boys under fourteen; where the father or guardian had refused his consent*. The universities would early have gone the length of expelling the friars from their precincts, had they not been prevented by the Pope's bulls. Yet these commands from the court of Rome were not obeyed without loud murmurs; and Richard Fitz-Ralph, archbishop of Armagh, expressed himself so openly and strongly in condemnation of the friars, that he was cited, at their instigation, to appear before the pope, and answer for the language he had used. The archbishop obeyed: but instead of attenuating what had passed, he prepared and read at the pope's presence, a laboured defence of all his charges against the friars. In this memorial, he boldly reprobated the folly of supposing, that the friars could please God, by vowing to be beggars all their lives; and the hypocrisy of representing themselves as poor and pennyless, and determined to remain so, when many of them were notoriously aspiring to be promoted to the highest offices in church and state; when they were impropiators of churches; and might be met with in every wealthy parish, illegally assuming the right to perform those parts of the priest's duty, which were known to be the most lucrative. He farther stated that, in his time, and he had been chancellor of the university, there used to be 30,000 students in Oxford; but that its numbers were now reduced to 6000.—That the dread which parents felt, of having their children seduced to become friars, by the arts of those who had fixed themselves in that city against the will of the university, was the occasion of this lamentable

* In 1402.

falling off.—And that this dread was no unreasonable one; inasmuch as the friars' convents were filled with boys under ten years of age, who had been admitted into the order before they were taught their creed.

The immense number of students at Oxford, which England contained scarcely a fourth of its present population, can only be explained by observing, that the university was then both a school and a college at once; where boys might acquire the very liberal scholarship then expected in gentlemen, or the qualifications necessary to make them acceptable to the numerous monasteries; and where young men coming from Scotland, Ireland, and some even from the continent, as well as natives of England, crowded round lecturers, to gain from them the information which could not otherwise be procured, in the dearth of books. Probably most of the students were sent by their parents for monks or priests. Even a father, who had no objection to requiring that his son should irrevocably pledge himself to a life of celibacy in some monastery, where he might indulge in much coarse luxury, and rise to be a lordly abbot, could not bear to have him condemn himself to wear the mean dress of a bare-footed friar, girt with a rope, and sworn to gain his bread by begging. Yet the destruction of human life by the plague, and the thirst of the gentry for the spoils and honors of war, cannot but be suspected of having done more towards thinning the universities, than the fear of parents, lest their sons should become friars rather than monks.

Nor was this the only point in which Archbishop Fitz-Ralph's accusations appear unreasonable. He made it a charge against the friars, that the money they collected enabled them to buy up all the books on scientific or theological subjects; so that no one else could procure any. He added, that he himself experienced the ill consequences of

sent four of his chaplains to Oxford for their
 ment, who had since written him word, that,
 ing able to procure a Bible there, or any other
 le book of divinity, they requested leave to
 come again. It was surely creditable to the
 hat they should spend much in storing their
 s with books; and it would naturally have
 ct of encouraging copyists to multiply their
 . But into what a state of darkness must
 arch have fallen, when the Bible was so little
 that one who knew the university well, could
 that four priests, sent to study there, found
 ilt to get access to a copy!

ill argued, or unjust as some parts of the
 shop's memorial might be, it was of great use
 age. For it taught the clergy to try the pro-
 of papal enactments by the word of God.
 ery accusation against the friars, which he
 to have made good, was felt to be a proof
 : popes had erred in so uniformly supporting
 Fitz-Ralph fell sick, and died before he
 quit the papal residence at Avignon. But
 use for which he had contended was
 taken up, with greater ability, by John
 2.

is that Wicliffe, on whom it pleased God
 such honour, that the Reformation of the
 , the recovery of the glorious light of the
 , is ordinarily reckoned to have begun with
 aching. Being born about the year 1324, at
 e near Richmond in Yorkshire, Wicliffe
 his studies at Queen's College, Oxford; but
 moved to Merton, where Archbishop Brad-
 e was a lecturer. The members of the univer-
 t learned to admire the future adversary of
 as an able disputant, after that formal yet
 nanner of arguing, then called scholastic, or
 hod of the schools. The respect with which
 e found *himself* heard, was useful in en-
 u.

couraging him to sound the foundations on popular opinions then rested; and his prejudice as an university tutor, made him quick-sight discovering how unscriptural was the whole system of the friars. His next conclusion was, that if reliance they placed on their vows of poverty and celibacy, as means of salvation, did indeed confer honour upon Him whom the Scriptures set forth as *become the Author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him* *, then the popes, who encouraged and sanctioned such a system, must be no more than blind leaders of the blind.

The zeal with which he reproved the friars far from being unpopular with the University; probably procured for him the mastership of

1361. College; by which society he was provided with the rectory of Fillingham, in Lincolnshire. And Archbishop Islip having determined to get rid of the monks to whose superintendence he had entrusted Canterbury Hall, a lately founded by himself, appointed Wickliffe

1365. warden, in the place of the ejected monk, as a person whose boldness, in attacking of the mis-called *religious orders*, gave proof that he would not be afraid of incurring the animosity of another. It so happened, however, that Laurence the next archbishop, was himself a monk. His attachment to his brethren, led him to re-instate

1367. in possession of the Hall, and to deprive Wickliffe of the wardenship; as though Islip had gone beyond his lawful power. Against this decree Wickliffe appealed; and the appeal was necessarily carried before the pope, Urban V. the only person having authority to revise the proceedings of a living primate. But whilst the appeal was going on, Wickliffe was advancing in his

nation of the Scriptures, and trying every doctrine, and every rule of the Church, by the written Word of God. And the farther he proceeded in this course, the more convinced he became, that the rulers of the Romish Church had sinned grievously; *in making the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition* *. Hence, as the Lord gave His servant courage to proclaim publicly, and abilities to express forcibly, those truths to which his eyes were opened, it is not to be wondered that his cause did not prosper in the papal court; where the pope, after a delay of three years, confirmed the 1370. decree of Archbishop Langham.

Being saved by this decision from one powerful temptation, to keep back that which it was in his heart to utter, Wicliffe proceeded in his noble path; and taking his stand, not peculiarly against the reigning pope, but against the whole of popery, he published, "A Dialogue between Truth, Falsehood, and Wisdom," in which he condemned all the mass of rubbish, that had so long hidden the beauty of the foundations of the Christian's faith from almost every eye. In this work, he declared, that the popes were not vicars of Christ, as they presumed to style themselves, but proud vicars of the king of pride.—That it was want of faith to pray to saints, when Christ offers to be our mediator and intercessor; for, if we believe the Scriptures, none can be so willing and able to help as He.—That repentance means a change in the disposition of the mind; without which, confession, absolution, and submission to penance, could be but useless forms. And that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine continue still to be bread and wine, after the priest's blessing; instead of losing their nature, as the popes vainly taught.

Nor did Wicliffe content himself with simply

* Matt. xv. 6.

exposing errors, in this remarkable dialogue. He urged the great to protect their countrymen from the frauds, exactions, and sins of the friars; of whom he computes, that there were 4000 in England; and that they wasted 100,000*l.* a year, after collecting it by begging. "If the king," said he, "sends an army to combat the French, he chooses the bravest and most skilful warriors to command it. Ought there, then, to be less caution and anxiety felt about the qualities of those who are to lead us in the combat against Satan; and to guide the people in a warfare, whose aim is the conquest of the kingdom of heaven."

Though deprived of his wardenship, Wicliffe was still a public lecturer on divinity, in the University. And now that he devoted all his talents to restoring the Scriptures to their due honour, above every thing that has been written, or commanded by men, he received the blessing promised in those Scriptures; where *the Lord saith, them that honour me, I will honour* *. His teaching was heard with reverence by numbers, who witnessed the blamelessness of his life; and they went forth, convinced of the truth of what he taught, to repeat his words in the various parts of the country; when they returned home to their connections. It so happened, that the government was led to resolve, at this especial time, on sending ambassadors to Flanders; there to treat with others, from the papal court, respecting the bounds within which the pope should henceforward confine some of his extravagant claims. And, as it was evidently most desirable that the persons employed on this embassy should be such, if such could be found, as neither wished for the pope's favour, nor feared his anger, Wicliffe was named second in this commission;
 1374. having only the Bishop of Bangor put above

in, as its titled head. For his services on this occasion, he was rewarded by the crown with the story of Lutterworth. And though the embassy is of very little use, in a worldly point of view; since the pope only made some trifling concessions for the present, and would not agree to any restraints on his authority; yet it was advantageous to the nation, that its sagacious reformer should have this opportunity of witnessing, how little the pope regarded the welfare of the Church, so he could but draw more of its wealth into his own hands. When he saw the fleece thus coveted, and the flock distressed, Wicliffe would remember, how our Saviour spoke of a false shepherd, that should not enter the door by Him, *the only true door*; but *climbing up some other way**. And that not the clergy only, but all his countrymen, might be enabled to judge for themselves, whether the Word of God required them to submit to strangers, whose voice they knew not, Wicliffe began to translate the Bible, into the only voice they did know. Learning had so much declined, since war and its pursuits engaged every active mind, that even he seems to have been unable to read the Scriptures in their original tongues. But the vulgar Latin Bible was a sufficiently faithful copy of the Greek and Hebrew, for the purpose. From it, therefore, Wicliffe rendered the Scripture into English. And copies of his translation were quickly written out, and circulated, such of the clergy as had become no less anxious than he, that their countrymen should have access to those *Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation*†. As, however, it was out of their power so to multiply copies, whilst the art of printing was yet unknown, that this blessed book could be brought within the reach of the poor, the good fruits which the Word of God will not fail to

* *John x. 1—7.*† *2 Tim. iii. 15.*

produce, in those who receive and honour it, were gloriously displayed by the refusal of many of these converted clergy to accept any preferment, which might prevent their travelling from house to house, to read the Scriptures in the ears of all who would receive them.

The objects of Edward the Third's ambition sink into nothingness, when compared with the achievements of these *faithful soldiers and servants of Christ*; who displaying the word of God, as the banner under which they had engaged to *fight manfully against sin, the world, and the devil*, received power to rescue such as were to be saved in their own generation, from the dominion of *spiritual wickedness*; whilst they prepared the road, and pointed out the way, by which increasing multitudes, in every age, might escape from darkness to light, from bondage to slavery, and from degrading follies and offensive superstitions to true wisdom, and true piety. Not many years passed by, before *their work was tried with fire**; which purged some human dross away; but the greater part *abode*. And in the last day a blessed multitude, tracing the bread of life, on which their own souls had fed, to the seed sown by these humble missionaries, may attest their claim to the wondrous promise, *that they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever†*.

But, whilst the happy fruits of their warfare have been, and shall be, without end, the advantages which Edward hoped to derive from his boasted victories, had nearly vanished before he died.

Had the king of England demanded less, he might have gained more by the treaty of Bretigny. It has been seen, that the first payments made by the Dauphin, were chiefly supplied from a foreign

* 1 Cor. iii. 13.

† Dan. xii. 3.

quarter. And anxious as king John was to fulfil the terms, on which he had been set at liberty; he could neither raise the remaining sums as they became due; nor could he persuade the states of his realm to join him, in filling up those legal forms, which were thought necessary to complete the surrender of his sovereign rights over the provinces ceded to Edward. Hence the French hostages were so long detained in England, that, weary of having been separated, nearly four years, from their homes and families, they besought the English monarch to let them redeem themselves, like prisoners of war. The duke of Anjou, accordingly, and some others of their number, received his permission to revisit their native country, on promising to surrender themselves again into his custody, as soon as they could ascertain, whether their friends and vassals would enable them to pay the price he might fix for their ransom. Most of the others kept their word; but the duke, having joined his family, declared that he would not return to England, to be again a hostage for his father. This breach of his parole vexed king John exceedingly; and rather than be considered as partaking his son's dishonour, he resolved to quit his kingdom, and to become once more Edward's prisoner, hoping that a frank statement of his difficulties might induce the latter to make some abatement in his demands. It was in vain that the French council attempted to dissuade their sovereign from putting himself again in the power of his adversary. He replied to their advice, by saying, "that if honour were banished from every other place, it ought to reign in the hearts of kings."—A principle of noble sound, but of little use to the happiness of mankind, so long as cruelty or downright dishonesty, towards the humble and dependent, were thought no breaches of the law of honour. *In the present instance, however, the*

king of France certainly took a very remarkable step to satisfy his sense of duty. He had announced his determination to lead an army of crusaders into Syria, as soon as ever his word, pledged to Edward, should leave him at liberty to do so. These two things made him to be regarded, by all ages, as a model of perfect goodness in a monarch. They reasonably procured for him a friendly and respectful reception from king Edward; and Savoy Palace, in the Strand, being again assigned to him for a residence, the two monarchs had already met on several festive occasions.

Apr. 8, 1364. terchanging much stately hospitality, king John fell sick; and, after a short illness, died.

His son and successor, Charles V., was a better man; but he had far more worldly wisdom. Reverses had taught him to husband his means, and to be watchful over his passions, and to receive counsel with thankfulness. And, as the events had made the Black Prince grow more and more overbearing, these opposite qualities produced the effects which might be expected on the foundation of each. The prince lived as a sort of viceroy in his father's stead, in the south of France; kept a sumptuous court at Bourdeaux. There he was visited by Pedro the Cruel, king of Castile; a man whose atrocious crimes had made it his nearest relations to unite with his other enemies in expelling him from the throne; on which had placed his base-born brother Henry in his stead. The fallen monarch had sent forward messengers, to sound the prince's inclinations, and to speak of his expulsion from Castile, as being occasioned about by the hostile interference of the French, rather than by his own people's dislike to his government. And, when the prince had bidden his messengers comfort their sovereign, and invited him into his presence, Don Pedro came, as a humble

suppliant; and besought him, not to suffer a crowned king to be stripped of his lawful rights by an usurper, whose base birth made him incapable of inheriting them. "His treasures, he trusted that false brother would never enjoy. For they had been so carefully concealed, before his retreat, that he might defy his enemies to discover them. A little he had brought away; and his servants would now produce some presents, which he begged to offer, as marks of his respect for so renowned a personage, as his cousin* the Prince of Wales."

His tale of hidden treasures was especially meant for the ears of the English and Gascon knights; who crowded the hall of audience. And they believed the whole, when they saw, among these imagined pledges of the liberality with which he would repay their support, a golden table, studded with pearls and precious stones, and having in its centre a pretended fragment of the very cross on which our Saviour died.

The Black Prince was therefore heard with murmurs of applause, when he called upon them to muster their men-at-arms, and to prepare for a Spanish campaign. Yet his counsellors had warned him, that Pedro was, indeed, a shameless tyrant, who having stained his hands with the blood of his nobles, and brethren, had even murdered Blanche his queen; and she, too, a princess of the royal house of France, and thus nearly related to that of England. His calamities, they said, were stripes inflicted by the just wrath of God; who would teach all other kings and princes, by the example of his wretchedness, to abstain from such foul crimes. The Princess of Wales, also expressed her deep regret, that he should allow himself to be imposed upon by a person so notoriously, and so dreadfully, wicked. Her advice, however, only made him

* See page 56.

remark, "I see, she wants to have me always by her side. But a prince, who wishes to be honourably remembered, must seek occasions of distinguishing himself in war." To the advice of his council he replied, with thanks for their fidelity, "That he was no stranger to Pedro's character; but that to suffer him thus to lose his crown, would be to lower the rank of kings in the eyes of their subjects. And that, therefore, no kings, or sons of kings, ought ever to acquiesce in it."

Had he, who was so zealous for the honour of kings, been accustomed to pay due honour to the King of kings, he would *have delighted in his statutes*; and then he *would not have forgotten His word**, which says, *enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away*†. But the prince having chosen to make common cause with Pedro the Cruel, next felt it necessary to enter into a close

Sept.
1366.

alliance with Charles the Bad; through whose kingdom of Navarre he proposed to enter Spain. And when he had thus linked himself with two sovereigns, already publicly known, and still distinguished in history, by names that attest the universal abhorrence in which their conduct was held, he next sent letters to the chiefs of those hordes of robbers, *the companies*, in whose continued existence no "kings, or sons of kings, ought ever to have acquiesced," and invited them to join his camp. In such disgraceful company did this model of chivalry, who lived but for honour, set forth, to compel a free people, as the Castilians then were, to crouch before a tyrant, of whose odious character he had declared himself thoroughly aware.

The campaign was short. For in a great battle fought near Vittoria, the prince so thoroughly routed the army of Pedro's rival

April 3,
1367.

* Psalm cxix. 16.

† Prov. iv. 14, 15.

Henry, that the latter could make no farther resistance.

But from the hour of exultation over the unoffending Spaniards, who perished by his sword, or fled before him, the hour of retribution began. And a succession of calamities, bringing no repentance in their train, might well be thought to be "stripes inflicted by the just wrath of God;" into whose ears the cry of the oppressed had long risen up against the unhappy prince.

As soon as Don Pedro perceived, that the dread of the English would serve his purposes, without their accompanying him, he requested the prince to halt his army, and remain with it in the neighbourhood of Valladolid, whilst he himself should proceed into the south of Spain to recover his treasures; and thus provide for the pay due to his brave allies. There the army accordingly waited, till weeks and months had passed on; whilst the prince fondly trusted to the promises of Pedro, till he saw his troops melting away from disease; the consequence of an unhealthy season and of their own intemperance. He then felt that he had been duped; and, irritated by the mortifying discovery, became himself a prey to a lingering sickness. And now his knowledge of the character of the ally he had chosen became the prince's torment. For he thought that the perfidious Pedro had surely poisoned him. Ill as he was, however, his officers at length urged the necessity of returning into Aquitaine, before the number of combatants in his army was still farther diminished; lest it should prove incapable of defending itself against the vengeance of the natives, whom its robberies had converted into bitter foes. Still the prince hesitated to confess in the face of Europe, by his retreat, that he had been thus grossly imposed upon by a man, in whom he ought never to have placed confidence. But, whilst he hesitated, there came letters from the princess his wife, to in-

form him that the same Henry, whom his arms had driven from the throne of Castile, was again at the head of a strong body of troops, and making successful war on Edward's French territories. At hearing this, the prince rallied his spirits, and would have straightway marched the poor remains of his gallant army through Navarre. But he was to have still farther experience of the folly of expecting to find any thing, except shameless selfishness, in a breast where wickedness notoriously reigned supreme; Charles the Bad refused to let him re-cross Navarre; unless he would be content with a permission, which should extend to no others besides the officers of his household. And the prince felt himself so weak, that he was feign to receive this rude message with thanks. He accordingly left his army to make its way home as it could; and entered Aquitaine once more; at the same time that Henry quitted its frontiers, to rejoin his friends in

Sept.
1367.

Castile.

The punishment of Pedro was not long delayed. The ferocity with which he began to avenge himself, for his late exile, increased the number of his enemies; and made them desperate. There was no longer an English army at hand, to keep them in awe. Of the adventurers in that army, many rejoined Henry; that they too might take vengeance on the man, by whom they had been deluded and injured. It was in vain that the tyrant next made an alliance with the Moors, enemies to the Christian name; he was betrayed; defeated; pursued; made prisoner; and killed, in a horrid struggle, by the dagger of his ambitious brother.

Mar. 23,
1369.

In the meanwhile, the train of calamities, in which his confederacy with Pedro was made to involve the prince, proceeded still. When preparing for the Spanish expedition, he had rashly pledged himself to make good the promises of Pedro. Hence, as the different portions of the army he had left ar-

ived by various routes from Spain, they pressed on towards Bourdeaux ; to require, at his hands, the pay due for a whole campaign. To satisfy these demands in part, the prince melted his plate, that it might be coined into money ; and called together a parlement from the subject provinces of Gascony and Poitou, that a hearth-tax might be granted, to raise the remainder. But as their wants were pressing, he also thought it necessary to connive at their pillaging the neighbourhood of their quarters. And, when that excited just murmurs against his government, he bade the chiefs of *the companies* lead their men beyond his jurisdiction ; and find, in France, such means of living as they could. They took him at his word ; and, announcing that they entered France by his command, they were quickly joined by more disbanded soldiers. And thus reinforced, they overran the province of Champagne, with all the violence and cruelty expected, in that age, from an invading army.

By each of these measures, the prince either made new enemies, or gave old and concealed ones an excuse for their hostility. The Gascons complained that their country was oppressed, and not protected. Their lords, who had been irritated by his imperious manners, and by the superiority which his English courtiers assumed over them, refused their assent to the proposed hearth-tax ; and privately applied to Charles V. to receive their appeals, as still the rightful sovereign of the whole of France. Whilst that monarch's acknowledged subjects were eager to support him in any measures he might take to punish the Black Prince, for sending *the companies* to desolate their country anew.

Having observed this turn in the public feeling throughout France ; and sent orders to his officers on the frontiers of Aquitaine, to protect any persons, or places, which might throw off the English yoke, the French King sent the prince a summons,

Jan. 25,
1369.

in all due form, requiring him to appear before the chamber of peers, sitting in London, and answer certain complaints made against him by the barons, prelates, and commonalty of Gascony. This open avowal of his determination to resume that feudal superiority over Edward's French territories, which had been relinquished by the treaty of Bretigny, came upon the prince with surprise. But, after a moment's hesitation, he bowed back his head with an indignant air, and bade the French messengers tell their king, that "since he was at their command, he would not fail to visit Paris. He would go with a helmet on; and sixty thousand men in his company." This haughty threat, however, he found it out of his power to fulfil. The revolt of one town, or district, after another, kept his English troops fully occupied. And the continuance of the disorder, with which he had been stricken in Spain, was fast rendering him incapable of bearing fatigue. Had these calamities been sent in mercy, by Him, who *chasteneth his people for their profit, that we may be partakers of His mercy*, it would have been perceived by their *yielding to the peaceable fruit of righteousness* *. But, instead of being humbled or softened by his afflictions, the prince's temper became more and more peevish and irritable; till he seemed to be indulging himself in when commanding, or witnessing, deeds of cruelty. His last action, as a soldier, was the recapture of the city of Limoges, which had been betrayed by its bishop to the Duke of Berry †, without the privity of the greater part of its inhabitants. It stood a month's siege; the duke having introduced a French garrison, strong enough both to defend the ramparts, and to keep the terrified citizens

* Hebr. xii. 10, 11.

† Brother to Charles V. King of France, and now acting as his general.

thorough submission to its three commanders. At length, however, a part of the wall, having been undermined, fell and choked up the ditch.

The English then stormed the place, and Oct.
1370.
the Black Prince, too weak to mount his horse, was carried over the ruins of the wall, on a litter. As soon as he appeared in the streets, men, women, and children, flung themselves on their knees before him, crying, Mercy, mercy, gentle lord. But, unhappily, evil passion had got such a mastery over him, that he suffered the sword to continue its work, even upon the tender and the delicate; whilst he looked on, and would not hear their cries.—Yet they were heard in heaven.—And the poor sinner was left evidence, by his conduct, that even then, and he desired to honour God, as he himself desired to be honoured of men, his rage would have given way to the laws of God, as it did to the laws of chivalry. For, as his litter moved on, he came where the three French knights, late commanders of the enemy's garrison, were combating alone, with their backs to a wall, against the onset of the English, led forward by his brother John of Gaunt and the Earl of Cambridge. At this sight he made his bearers stop; and, presently calling the knights to his side, gave them their lives. The Bishop, too, as a churchman of rank, was spared in like manner; though, if the treason must be fiercely punished, he was the author of that treason. But still the prince bade the massacre of the citizens go on. And it ended not, till his soldiers could find no more to slay; and then, having robbed what houses they would, they set the town on fire.

Such dreadful, and altogether unjust cruelty, affords another instance of the extent to which the laws of chivalry made the laws of God of none effect; by teaching men to honour the brave and great, but to despise the lowly and the poor. Faith, only, could have brought the prince to obey the com-

mand, *Honour all men**; by making him feel, and not merely acknowledge in words, that he and the meanest in that crowd, on which he trampled, had souls alike; which will be still living, when the pomp and the kingdoms of this world shall have passed away: and will appear together before him who is *no respecter of persons*†. On the other hand the wish to be praised by the thoughtless and the proud, was enough to make the prince obey the law of chivalry. It bade him spare the four, who were of knightly rank; but it gave him permission to wreak his vengeance on the unwarlike, or vulgar, thousands. And he obeyed its commands, and had the praise he coveted.

In the mean while the French court of peers had adjudged all the domains of the Plantagenets in France to be forfeited, by the prince's neglect to appear before them, as summoned, on the suit of the Gascon barons. And, with a very singular disregard to the fact, they had declared that the treaty of Bretigny gave Charles V. a right to sanction, and act upon this judgment.

Edward III. had also consulted his parliament, respecting the renewal of the war; had been recommended by it, to resume the title of king of France; and had obtained a vote, imposing a heavy duty on wool and various other articles, that he might be enabled to set on foot a powerful armament. But though his subjects were foolishly ready to encourage his ambition, and willing to give him their hearty support; though his troops were as brave as ever, whilst those of the French were discouraged, by the remembrance of their former defeats; still the English lost ground in France by each Jan. campaign. The Black Prince had quitted 1371. Bourdeaux to lead a languishing existence in England; and John of Gaunt, who succeeded him

* 1 Pet. ii. 17.

† Acts x. 34.

his governments, split on nearly the same rock as ; taking to wife Constantia, an orphan daughter Pedro the Cruel. By a former marriage with heiress of the house of Lancaster, John of Gaunt had got possession of the vast estates once belonging to its earls; and had been made duke of Lancaster, on this account, by the king his father. He now chose to add to this title, that of King of Castile and Leon; assuming that those kingdoms had become his inheritance, as the husband of Constantia. His vanity in this was altogether absurd; inasmuch as Pedro had left sons still living, though in prison. But the claim was an insult to Henry, now the acknowledged sovereign of Castile; who became, in consequence, the hearty ally of Charles V.; and sent out a fleet to watch the coast of Aquitaine. The Spanish ships were then, afterwards, larger than those built in our days; and meeting the earl of Pembroke, June 23, 1372. Rochelle, they took or sunk every vessel of an English fleet, bound to Bourdeaux under his command, and laden with troops, arms, and treasure. The destruction of these supplies gave such blow to the English party in France, that the nobles of Poitou promised to surrender their fortresses, and take the oath of fidelity to Charles V.; unless king Edward should send them other reinforcements before Michaelmas. A herald was sent to England, to give due notice of this convention. But Edward resolved to reach Poitou, within the appointed time, at the head of such an army as would make the generals of Charles flee before him. For this purpose he got together a fleet of 400 sail, chiefly impressed merchantmen; and embarked on board of it at Southampton, with his sons and chief nobility. But adverse winds baffled all their attempts to round the coast of Brittany, till Michaelmas-day was past; when the king bade their pilots turn back into port; exclaiming, "There never

was a king of France who so seldom put on his armour, and yet there never was one who put me to such difficulty."

This remark, and the return of the wind to the long desired quarter, as soon as it became too late, should have led the king to reflect, that his present reverses were not the work of man.

The preparations thus brought to nothing are said by Walsingham, a nearly cotemporary chronicler, to have cost king Edward above two millions of pounds sterling. Considering the difficulty of raising any large sums in those days, this estimate is too high to be credible; but the expense had been such as to occasion unusual murmurs, when the king applied to his people for still farther aid. The parliament plainly told the king, that there had been much mismanagement. And, for a while, they attributed this to his employing clergymen as his chief ministers of state; which they, therefore, requested he would do no longer. And, in compliance with this request, he took the chancellorship from William of Wykeham, bishop of Winchester; and the office of treasurer from the bishop of Exeter.

In the following year the Duke of Lancaster July, crossed over to Calais, with the flower of the 1373. English nobility in his train, and an army containing 3000 mounted men-at-arms, and 10,000 archers; choosing rather to force his way through France, than risk another failure at sea. He found, however, that every town on his road was too well garrisoned to be entered, without the delay of a siege. And when the English passed on, these garrisons pressed upon their rear; though, by the prudent command of king Charles, they allowed the duke no opportunity of bringing them to an engagement. If, on the other hand, they halted in the villages, food sufficient for the army could not be found; and if a weak detachment was sent out to

collect provisions it was cut off. The English were necessitated, therefore, to keep moving on, without allowing either their horses, or themselves sufficient rest. When they reached the districts lately ravaged by *the companies*, the difficulty of finding sustenance increased—the horses perished from fatigue—and gentlemen of rank were first reduced to struggle on a-foot, casting off their heavy armour; and were next seen begging the bread, which they had neither means of procuring, nor money to buy. So that by the time the duke got to Bourdeaux, he entered its gates with but a few weary followers; instead of being at the head of a gallant army. The English government was so much dispirited by the utter ruin of this promising expedition, that the French king was allowed to take possession, with not little resistance, of all that Edward had once held, or conquered; except the towns of Bourdeaux, Bayonne, and Calais, with the unimportant districts entrouled by their garrisons.

Whilst the ancient inheritance of the Plantagenets, in France, was thus diminished at the close of this warlike reign, notwithstanding the boasted victories of Cressy and Poitiers; the authority of Edward was entirely disowned in great part of Ireland; and too weak to preserve either order, or peace, in those districts where it was acknowledged. For a while, indeed, his son Lionel, duke of Clarence, whose first wife was heiress to De Burgh, Earl of Ulster, and whom the king, therefore, made Governor of Ireland, brought the Anglo-Irish nobles to abstain from living like men whose hands were against every one. But the laws passed in a parliament held, during his government, at Kilkenny, though they forbade these nobles to make war on the original Irish without the king's leave, still treated the latter as savages; whom this parliament took or granted, none would attempt to win over to civilized habits, and none could associate with, but

they must be brutalized by the connection. These laws, therefore, made it high treason for any one of the English race to intermarry with the Irish natives;—he declared his lands and tenements forfeited, if he should use the Irish language or dress;—forbade the Anglo-Irish lord to allow the neighbouring natives the use of his pastures, for their cattle;—and enjoined the bishops, not to present any natives to benefices; the abbots, not to receive them into their monasteries.

When such was the system of conduct towards the occupants of one half of Ireland, which the king's representatives in the other half found necessary to enforce, or assent to, we cannot wonder that one English gentleman, Sir Richard Peckbridge, refused to go out to Ireland, at the king's bidding, as governor; and defended his refusal, on the plea, that his sovereign had no right to banish him from England, unless he could be proved guilty of a felony. Nor that the next person applied to, Sir William Windsor, also declined the same burdensome office, till he was promised 28,000*l.* a year for the charges of his government; being 3000*l.* more than the whole of the revenue raised in Ireland for the crown.

It was, doubtless, most painful for Edward III. to live to see those conquests lost, for which he had gone through so much labour, anxiety, danger, and guilt. But he had coveted conquest, only to be honoured of men; and he was, now, farther doomed to learn that he was pitied, or despised by his subjects; instead of receiving proofs of that popular admiration, which had been dearer to him than the welfare of his immortal soul. In his sixty-fifth year, an age at which many of those who reach it, enjoy the advantages of experience, with their powers of judgment still undiminished, the commons addressed him as a person no longer fit to be trusted with the decision of even the “smaller

atters of state." Wherefore they requested, that such business might be transacted without the advice of four, nor any thing important without the advice and assent of at least six, out of a committee of twelve prelates and other lords; who were to reside continually with the king. As one reason for this interference, they asserted that his affairs were mismanaged, as to drive some of his creditors to their just claims upon his treasury for less than a pence in the pound; and they charged the lord treasurer, his chamberlain, and certain merchants, directors of the revenue, with the guilt of this mismanagement. For which that lord, and the other ministers, were forbidden to approach the court in person; and their goods and chattels declared to be forfeited.

Nor did the same parliament hesitate to expose the sovereign's unhappiness, in having given himself up in his old age, to a sinful attachment for an Italian woman, named Alice Peeves; who had formerly belonged to the household of his queen. It is said much as her, that they are *loud and stubborn* *;

that he who keepeth not far from them shall be lost, he has given his honour unto others, and his life unto the cruel †; and the king found this warning but too true. The woman had the boldness to sue at courts of justice, and require the judges, in his name, to decide causes in favour of those who had given her bribes to act thus. By permitting such violations of decency, the king forfeited his people's respect; whilst the parliament which rebuked him, insisted on her removal from about his person, and was remembered long after, under the honourable name of *the Good Parliament*.

The effects of this parliamentary interference on the royal authority, lasted, however, but a few

* Prov. vii. 11.

† Ibid. v. 9.

months. In this interval the Black Prince
 July 8, 1376. had died, leaving numerous bequests to churches and abbeys; and the golden table, Don Pedro's gift, to the monastery of Ashridge. For though the knowledge of the truth was spreading around, the blessing of receiving it had not been bestowed upon him. He had been left to perish in that miserable delusion, encouraged by the Romish priests, which made him imagine that the God of perfect holiness might be bribed, to let an unsanctified heart dwell in His presence, by the same gift which had helped to win himself over to a cordial alliance with *the Cruel*. But, alas, the answer to so offensive an imagination was already written. *Thou thoughtest, that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee. For him that disposeth his way aright, will I show the salvation of God* *.

The prince was succeeded in his titles, and as heir-apparent to the crown, by his son Richard; but he being yet a boy, could be no counsellor to the old king; who therefore naturally paid increased attention to the advice of his eldest surviving son, John of Gaunt. And this duke was of such an ambitious turn, that he felt no horror at encouraging his aged father in sin, for the purpose of acquiring a more complete ascendancy over him. Hence his influence was marked by the recall of Alice Pevensey and by the imprisonment of Sir Edward Delamare, speaker of the late house of Commons, for the public notice he had taken of her misconduct.

It was whilst the duke of Lancaster governed England, by orders issued in his father's name, that the transaction occurred which must not pass unnoticed. The city of Florence, though but too guilty of lending its aid to the support of the papal power, was

* Psalm l. 21. 23.

other respects, the noblest city at that time in world. For its citizens had not only made great sacrifices on various occasions to preserve their own freedom; but they did what no other people in the world, except the English in later times, have ever done. They repeatedly taxed themselves, to afford the inhabitants of other cities the means of defending their freedom also from powerful oppressors. When a plague followed by a famine, having weakened the population of Florence, and produced much misery, the papal legate thought, that, by secretly engaging one of *the companies* of robbers to increase the miseries, the poorer citizens might be tempted to lay the blame of their calamities on the chief men of their city; and might become so discontented, as to invite him to take possession of Florence for his master the pope. But his treachery was detected; and the Florentines, alarmed and indignant at the plot, resolved to give this legate employment enough, by inviting the oppressed inhabitants of the cities under his government, in the papal states, to declare themselves independent; which the greater number immediately did. This again so irritated the pope, Gregory XI. that he summoned the Florentines to appear before him and his cardinals, and justify their conduct if they could. Nor would the superstition of the Florentines allow them to neglect this summons. They, therefore sent Donato Barbadori to Avignon, to plead the cause of their city. This he did both firmly and respectfully; declaring, in a public audience, that nothing could have induced the Florentines to take up arms against the church of Rome, but the defence of their liberty—which,” said he, “we have enjoyed for near 400 years; and have made it so much a part of our nature, that it is as dear to us as our own hearts; and there is not one of us, who would not readily sacrifice his life to preserve it.” The pope, however, after *hearing what he had to say*, declared his

sentence to be,—that the city of Florence was from that moment under an interdict—and its rulers excommunicated.—And that he farther thereby authorised, and called upon, all persons to seize for their own use the property belonging to any Florentines wherever sojourning; and to seize and sell the said Florentines themselves as slaves. When Donat heard this sentence pronounced, he turned to the figure of our Saviour on the cross, which was fixed on high in the midst of the room; and exclaimed “to Thee I make my appeal, Almighty Father of mankind. To Thee, who art a just judge; and whom none can deceive. I call on Thee to witness the iniquity of this decision. In the last day, Thou wilt utter a more just judgment.”

To our ears the pope's sentence sounds nearly as foolish as it was unjust. For it should seem as improbable, that any independent sovereigns would sanction the pope in assuming authority to dispose of the persons and property of laymen, not his subjects; as it was iniquitous, to condemn peaceable merchants, dwelling far from home, to such a dreadful punishment, for any offence committed by their fellow-citizens, in their absence. But Gregory X. was aware, that he had thus thrown out a bait, which the known wealth of the Florentine merchants* would make but too tempting. And accordingly when the pope had sent his decree to England, with a request that the king would strictly enforce it against all the Florentines in his dominions, such of them as happened to be then dwelling in London, actually made it their own petition also, that Edward would take possession of themselves and their goods as his own. This they did from the fear of being worse treated by the mob, whom the same decree equally authorised to rob and injure them; or, as a monkish historian has not scrupled to say, thinking it a less

* See p. 204.

il to become the king's slaves, than to be given up to the pope.

They were, in consequence, all shut up in the tower; till the king's officers could secure, and take account of their property. After which they were discharged, and their goods replaced under their care, though not restored into their possession; the king notifying to the mayor and aldermen, by a letter under his seal, that these Florentines were to be considered in future, as under his especial protection; inasmuch as they were now "his own real slaves, without any reservation or fiction; and their property also his own, to be by them employed in trade for his benefit." And orders were sent by him at the same time, to all sheriffs and mayors, and the governor of Calais, requiring them to proceed in the same manner, with any Florentines found within their jurisdiction.

How much the English government gained by its consenting to the pope's iniquity, is not known. It was, at any rate, insufficient to meet the wants of the crown. The king was, therefore, again obliged to request farther aid from his parliament, towards satisfying the debts still due on account of the late disastrous campaigns; and to enable him to provide for the protection of the English coast, threatened by an invasion from France. This last statement was a most humiliating condemnation of its own folly, in aspiring to be the conqueror of France. But it was felt by parliament, that there was a real necessity for raising a considerable sum; and they agreed to do it by a very unusual mode; namely by the levy of half-a-crown, on every monk, nun, and beneficed priest; and of ten-pence on every other description of person, male or female, above fourteen years of age, excepting only public beggars, and the four orders of friars, as coming under that description.

With these last acts, in which his name occurs,

however, king Edward had little to do. His health was now rapidly declining. And as it has been seen that his neglect of the warning voice of Scripture had been followed by its fulfilment, in his meeting with rebukes where he used to find honour; so was he doomed to exemplify the other part of that same warning, by trusting his last hours to the cruel. For the crafty Alice Peeres, would allow none to speak to him of his sins. But flattered him with assurances that he would recover; till perceiving that his voice began to fail, and his eyes to become glazed, and the chill of death to spread over his limbs, she pulled the valuable rings off his fingers and left him to servants, whom her unfeeling example tempted to plunder the chamber in his sight. A priest found him speechless, but still sensible. **June 21.** spoke to him of praying to God for pardon. **1377.** and held out to him a crucifix, which the king kissed, with many tears, and then expired.

Thus ended a reign that had lasted half a century. Its beginning had been favorable to the increase of the population and domestic wealth of the country; and its close not much otherwise. For the campaigns since the peace of Bretigny, though inferior to the glory of Edward in the opinion of the world, had not carried so many of his subjects out of the kingdom, as the more popular season of his victories. Nor had the heavy sums which they cost the king been spent in hiring foreign allies, as in his earlier wars; but in purchases which promoted commerce. There had, however, been another plague since that peace; and two more of those famines which followed every bad harvest, so long as there were no corn factors to buy up the produce of an abundant year. But for these drawbacks, the facility of obtaining a maintenance for a family all the great plague, would have enabled the people to recover their numbers within twenty years, from

it desolating calamity. As it was, the population England amounted at the time of the king's death 2,300,000; which is not more than the number of inhabitants in the counties of York and Lancaster alone, at the present day.

It cannot be wondered that the foreign commerce England had fallen very low, since the loss of so many French ports, and the quarrel with Spain. It when we find Sir Edward Delamere stating, as speaker of the next-called parliament, that "formerly this town had more good ships, than the whole nation possessed at the end of king Edward's reign;" we must allow for the prejudices of a man, whom that monarch had ill-treated. On the other hand, the large sums of money brought from abroad for the payment of ransoms, during the victorious period of the late king's career, had rather made a few persons wealthy, than compensated for the weight of the taxes, and other burdens imposed on the farmer and tradesman. And this sudden influx of wealth, falling into the possession of vain-glorious men, had tempted and enabled them to spend so much in costly dresses, and ostentatious hospitality, that the commonsense men became alarmed at the rapid growth of luxury, as it spread by imitation, from rank to rank; and made ineffectual endeavours to check it by parliamentary enactments. For this purpose laws were passed, forbidding lords and gentlemen to give their servants more than one meal of flesh or fish, in the year; and describing what sort of apparel, and what ornaments each class might or might not wear, from the labourer to the esquire with 500*l.* a-year. As it none should use any fur, who had a less annual income than 250*l.* Nor any gold or silver ornaments in their knives, girdles, bracelets, or rings; unless they could spend 25*l.* a-year *. These laws, how-

* It must be remembered, that all prices and expences mentioned since the beginning of Edward the Third's French wars,

ever, met with little regard; and our ancestors, having resolved to be splendid before they had acquired any taste for elegance of attire, fell into the most uncouth and fantastic fashions. Both sexes wore party-coloured dresses; so made that the one half should be of one colour, and the other in strong contrast with it. The shoes of the gentlemen tapered out into long points, fastened upwards to the knee, with gold or silver chains. The hose on one leg would be scarlet, and on the other black. And under their beard was buttoned a silk hood, embroidered with figures of animals, or dancing men. Whilst the ladies wore daggers fastened to their stomachers, and sugar-loaf shaped head-dresses three feet high, with ribbands reaching from the top to the ground.

On the other hand the king himself was led, by his thirst for glory, to spend much of his share of the spoils of France in erecting sumptuous edifices, which might attract the admiration of succeeding ages; and was imitated in this by several of his great nobility and prelates. William of Wykeham, the munificent Bishop of Winchester, was at once the king's minister and architect; and planned for him such additions and improvements, as made Windsor Castle into a stately residence, instead of being a mere fortress. Corresponding additions were made by the Percies to their castle at Alnwick; to Warwick Castle, by the Beauchamps; and to Kenilworth, by John of Gaunt, who also built the noble gateway of Lancaster Castle. It was in the early part of this century, that there grew up that peculiar style of architecture, which has of late been called *pure Gothic*. This style is distinguishable by windows and arches, of a breadth equal to the distance from the top of the side pillars

have been expressed in modern money, containing the same weight of silver.

the key-stone ; by clustered columns, having each
 lar of the cluster nearly of the same size ; by the
 continuance of some pillars of the cluster up to the
 of, where they branch out, and cross each other ;
 and by the elegant, but not over-loaded tracery of
 the windows. The best specimens of the pure
 gothic, in England, are the nave and choir of York
 and Exeter cathedrals ; the naves of Bristol and
 Winchester ; Merton College and New College in
 Oxford, the latter of which was founded by William
 Wykeham ; and the beautiful parochial churches
 of Thaxted, Saffron Walden, Louth, Cirencester,
 St. Michael in Coventry, Truro, Witney, and Strat-
 ford-upon-Avon.

He who should judge by the eye would be dis-
 posed to think, that these stately buildings give this
 five period its best right to be remembered ; inas-
 much as they still continue to ornament the face of
 our country, whilst nothing remains of all Edward's
 conquests. On the other hand, the vain-glorious
 swell upon the victories of Cressy and Poitiers,
 and the brilliant valour of the Black Prince ; and
 consider the reputation for bravery, which hence-
 forward attached itself to the English name, as the
 most important consequence of this warlike reign.
 But the national resistance to the pope's authority
 over the worldly possessions of the church, though
 probably regarded by king Edward as nearly inef-
 fectual, was in reality of superior importance to
 every other political measure of his reign ; from the
 care it had in rousing Wicliffe to oppose the pa-
 pacy, and in preparing others to give the truth a
 favourable ear.

Yet the king's ambition, and his wars, were far
 from being useless. Their exceeding guilt was his,
 and the nation's ; and his disappointment, and the
 decrease of national prosperity, which were their
 most conspicuous effects, were part of the punish-
 ment which that guilt deserved. But whilst Ed-

ward's thirst for conquest, and his campaigns, whether successful or unsuccessful, served the purposes of divine justice, though the king thought not of it; by afflicting those whom God would that he should chastise. They also served the purposes of divine mercy, by materially promoting the formation of that free and happy constitution, which it was the gracious intention of God to bestow upon the country, where He would that all men should have liberty to *search the Scriptures*.

If king Edward, instead of engaging in foreign wars, had ruled England in peace, it cannot be doubted but that he would have employed his eminent abilities, and popular manners, in devising and carrying measures for the increase of his own power as a king. But being left to follow the suggestion of his own ambitious heart, his abilities were directed to devising how his subjects might be brought to co-operate, most unreservedly, with his efforts to obtain the crown of France. He had the sagacity to see, that their cordial assistance would be most thoroughly secured by his appearing to take upon him the toils of war at their desire, rather than to be pursuing the ends of his own covetousness. Hence he affected to be continually asking the advice of the Commons. For he reasonably trusted, that the spirit of chivalry would tempt his nobles to love the same sin, for the like reward, as himself. Hence, by his encouragement, the Commons were led to give their advice about every kind of political measures. And this fell in very happily with the usual method of making laws in those days; which was not, as now, by acts agreed upon in parliament, and assented to by the king. In general the Commons presented requests, to which the Lords assenting, that joint petition was laid before the king, who returned such answers as he thought fit. And these answers, when agreeable to, or even when somewhat at variance with the desire of the petitioners, were

own up, at the end of the session, in the form of
rs; and so entered on the statute roll; and then
ified to the sheriffs of counties, as henceforward
rt of the law of the land.

Thus, in the 28th year of his reign, we find the
mmons petitioning "That present pay might be
ide of all purveyances, being under 50s., and of
eater within a quarter of a year *." Their object
is to procure relief from some of the evils attend-
g the allowed claim of the king's purveyors to seize
ery thing wanted for his use, on a promise of pay-
g for it. And the king's answer was, "It is good
make payment, as requested in the first article;
d to redress the second." In the statute roll for
at year, c. xii., there accordingly stood a law con-
rmably to this answer. Another petition made
the Commons, at the same time, was, "That it
ight be ordered, whether the tenants of such as
nd by barony, and are summoned to parliament,
all contribute to the payment of knights' fees,
uing to parliament." To which the king an-
ered, "As heretofore; so the same shall be."
r, in other words, he would not consent to the
aking of any new law on the subject; though jus-
e required that the prevailing custom should be
rrected. For it obliged such slaves as were oc-
piers of land, to contribute equally with the free-
lders, towards the support of the representatives
the latter, during their attendance in parlia-
ent †.

* The reader is to observe, that the reduction of all money
mentioned to modern currency of the same weight, is to be
derstood as continued, till further remarked upon.

† In the last year of this reign, Giles Daubeney and Fulkes
Pembrige, lords of the manor of Kempston, Bedfordshire,
imed for themselves and their tenants, some peculiar ex-
ption from the county rate; for paying the wages of the
ights of the shire. But the king ordered the sheriff to re-
f, that all proprietors of land, or tenants, not being them-
lves summoned to parliament, were bound to contribute; slaves
atives, as well as freeholders.

How much authority the Commons gained, by the establishment of such numerous precedents for their interfering, in consequence of their being systematically encouraged to do so during the greater portion of this reign of fifty years, is sufficiently conspicuous from the part they acted, just before its close. For, whereas the abuses resulting from favouritism, under that weak monarch Edward of Caernarvon, could only be counteracted by a corresponding abuse of power on the side of his nobles, accompanied with bloodshed; we have seen the Commons obliging Edward III. to dismiss his unworthy favourites, without either violating the law or committing any breaches of the peace. And though most of what this *good* parliament did, was quickly undone, after it had separated, still it was no slight proof of the courage and strength of the Commons, that they had voted and carried such measures for awhile, in opposition to the wishes and influence of the duke of Lancaster, a prince of the blood; whom they were used to hear called King of Castile; and who was certainly the most powerful subject in the kingdom.

CHAPTER V.

Richard II. surnamed of Bourdeaux.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>Popes.</i>	
	A. D.		A. D.
Charles IV.		Gregory XI.	
Rudolph IV.	1378	Urban VI.	1378
		Clement VII.	1378
<i>Kings of France.</i>		Boniface IX.	1389
Charles V.		Benedict XIII.	1394
Charles VI.	1380		
<i>Kings of Scotland.</i>		<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
Robert II.		John Palæologus.	
Robert III.	1390	Manuel II.	1384

RICHARD, the only surviving son of the Black Prince, was not quite eleven years old, when he succeeded his grandfather, Edward III. ^{June 21,} 1377. No any one of that *great cloud of witnesses* subscribed as, *compassing the good about**, to receive in their progress towards the attainment of *crown of glory that fadeth not away* for ever, it must have been a piteous sight to see this fair child receiving a perishable crown in the midst of pomps and vanities, enough to turn the heads of men who had experienced the insincerity of the world's image, and the emptiness of its promises. For the coronation of Richard II. was conducted with usually splendid pageantry; continued during three successive days. On the second, the boy was so weighed by the weight of his crown and robes, that he was obliged to be carried to bed, when the

* Heb. xii. 1.

champion, Dymoke, was about to enter the hall on horseback, and dare any one to deny Richard's right to be king of England. But he was soon raised from his sleep again, to be flattered with the notion that he was exercising his own power like a king; whilst he conferred, as other heads had determined that he should, the title of earl of Buckingham, on his uncle, lord Thomas Plantagenet; and of earl of Northumberland, on lord Henry Percy.

But, though every thing about the court bore a festive and joyous air, the state of the kingdom was such as should have made its governors anxious to avoid all unnecessary expenditure. For the neighbouring nations seemed bent on retaliating the miseries which their several countries had suffered from English invaders. A petty squadron, of French and Spanish vessels was master of the Channel; plundered the isle of Wight; burnt Hastings; and created such a panic, that orders were sent even to so inland a city as Oxford, expressing the fears of the government, lest the University should suffer from any sudden inroad of French invaders; and desiring that the gates and walls, which then surrounded the place, might be immediately and thoroughly repaired, as a needful precaution. The north was, at the same time, insulted by a tumultuary army of Scotch, under the earl of Dunbarton, who pillaged and reduced Roxburgh to ashes, in revenge for some ill usage received by their countrymen, at a fair held in that town. And so weakened, or dispirited were the chivalry of England, by their late reverses, that they were deemed incapable of defending their country, without the aid of a royal proclamation, which summoned every
July 25. male to arms, between the ages of sixteen and sixty; commanding even the bishops and abbots, to arm and enregiment their monks and other clergy. Add to this, the treasury was so empty, that the government was soon reduced to asking

ant merchants, corporations or monasteries, for
 an of sums, varying from 1500*l.* to 100*l.*
 ially, the security and happiness of the
 were much interrupted by large bands of
 rs. Yet a blessed work was going on. For
 sciples of Wicliffe were making known the
 to as many as were willing to receive it. And
 ere proceeding almost unopposed, except by
 ents or assertions, which the hearers might
 against theirs. But pope Gregory XI. heard
 orror, of an English teacher daring enough
 his countrymen, that the power which the
 a pontiffs arrogated, to excommunicate, to
 and to loosen, ought to be held as nothing
 ; unless their sentences were conformable to
 w of Christ, and their excommunications
 ed against the enemies of Christ. Nay, farther,
 ny ecclesiastic, and even the pope himself,
 lawfully be accused, and even chastised, by
 a. Such opinions Gregory declared to be
 akably wicked. And he issued five letters
 ills, at once, directed to the university of
 d, the bishop of London, the archbishop of
 bury, and the king, requiring them to co-
 e in seizing, imprisoning, and keeping Wicliffe
 ins; till the papal court should decide what
 be done with him. But the respect in which
 fe was held at Oxford, for his abilities and
 ty, added to the dissatisfaction which the
 t of the popes had given to the inferior
 h clergy, made the University hesitate, whether
 ould receive the pope's bull, with the usual
 tful forms, or altogether reject it. Whilst
 ke of Lancaster, acting for the king, admired
 urage with which Wicliffe had opposed the
 usurpation of the rights of the crown; and
 ined, in consequence, to uphold him. On
 her hand, the two prelates summoned Wicliffe

to appear before them at a court, to be holden in St. Paul's church.

Thither the reformer accordingly repaired, on the appointed day; being attended into the archbishop's presence by the duke of Lancaster, and lord Percy, then acting as earl marshal of England. The duke had bidden Wicliffe, not to shrink from answering the prelates; "for they are all unlearned," said he, "compared with you." And, as this distinguished party moved forward, the lord Percy ordered his marshalsmen to make the crowd give room. Courtney, bishop of London, a man of so bold bearing as either of these great noblemen, had his eye upon them; and as this interference of the earl marshal undeniably clashed with his jurisdiction, he said aloud, "If I had known, lord Percy, what masteries you would have kept in the church, I should have stopped your entering." The duke, but little accustomed to endeavour governing his temper, took fire at so authoritative a rebuke, and answered, "He shall keep such mastery here, though you say nay." Lord Percy, more calm, kept the tone of one having authority; and said, "Wicliffe, sit down, for you have many things to answer to." "It is unreasonable," replied the bishop, "that any one, cited before his judge, should be seated, whilst he answers. He must, and shall stand." "The lord Percy's motion for Wicliffe is not unreasonable," exclaimed the still angrier duke. "And as for you my lord bishop, who are grown so proud, and arrogant, I will bring down your pride; and that of all the English prelacy." He went on with still ruder language, when replied to; and was soon so provoked as to say, to one near him, "rather than take these words at his hands, I will pull the bishop out of the church by the hair." This indecent threat, from so unpopular a person as the duke was, set all the bystanders in an uproar. The

assembly broke up, without passing any judicial sentence. And the account of this attempt to intimidate their bishop, being spread over London, the citizens rose; demolished the marshalsea, and pillaged the Savoy palace, now the property of the duke. For which the latter, in his turn, had the mayor and aldermen deprived of their offices. And the prelates, afraid of being implicated with the rioters, if they held a like court again at this time, left Wicliffe in peace for the present.

So that where there was neither the will, nor, as men would have judged, the power wanting, to execute the urgent mandates of the pope, against his faithful labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, they equally fell to the ground without effect; the dissensions of angry men being over-ruled, to become the means of preventing the persecution of those who were, now, disseminating the truth in every corner of this favoured land: till it should have taken such firm root, and spread so widely, that human violence could no longer eradicate it from our soil.

They who remember, that *all things, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or powers, were created by Him, and for the honour of Him, who is the head of the church**, will not be surprised to find a greater number of the political events, at this important crisis in the history of the church of Christ, obviously contributing to the same end.

As soon as parliament met, the commons requested that the duke of Lancaster, and certain other noblemen, would be pleased to give them their advice, respecting the measures which it might be necessary for them to take. The duke, in reply, peevishly charged them with having accused him of traitorous practices; and they displayed their little esteem for him, by electing the same sir Edward

* Col. i. 16—18.

Delamere for their speaker, whom he had imprisoned. Whilst the lords put upon him a more humiliating slight, by leaving him out of the council of regency; to which they entrusted the government of the country, during the king's minority. And yet the duke's influence, or example, had the effect of inducing this same parliament to desire Wicliffe's opinion, whether, under the present difficulties, they might innocently seize, and employ for the benefit of the nation, money levied under the pope's orders, and about to be sent abroad for his use. To which he answered, that they might; and stated his reasons for so determining. But besides this instance of avowed respect for Wicliffe's authority, the parliament gave other proofs of its thinking, with him, that laymen might correct abuses in the church. For they passed an act, requiring all the foreign clergy, monks, and friars, to quit the kingdom; and requested the king to agree to another act, forbidding ecclesiastics to commute spiritual penances for money. And though the council of regency declined consenting to this last act, and exempted most of the beneficed clergy from the operation of the former, they were still more severe on the foreign friars; ordering the king's officers at the out-ports, to search every mendicant, before he embarked, and to seize whatever gold, silver, or jewels might be found about him; leaving him no more than a few pence, suitable to the poverty in which he was sworn to live.

Such consequences, following Wicliffe's exposure of the hollow foundation on which rested the extravagant authority claimed by the Romish church, naturally made the prelates more desirous to silence such an opponent. And as the duke of Lancaster was not likely to interfere again, just now, having withdrawn in anger to Kenilworth Castle, as though resolved never to trouble himself more with public affairs, the archbishop ventured to send Wicliffe

another citation; requiring him to attend a synod, which would meet in Lambeth chapel; and there to answer for certain assertions found in his published writings.

All these assertions were such as tended to lower the authority of the prelates. And when Wicliffe made them, he, at the same time, expressed his consciousness of the danger he ran; by saying things so offensive, to men capable of persecuting him to death. But now, when the hour of trial was at hand, and he could see no other means of escaping from their power, his talent for subtle dissimulation tempted him to turn too much, for safety, to it. He protested to the bishops, that his opinions had been misunderstood. And, to prove this, he explained away the assertions which had offended them, with far more ingenuity than candour; giving each meaning to the language he had before used, as he certainly could not have intended that it should convey to his readers.

The legends of the Romish church, concerning the saints whom it worships, bear this mark of falsehood upon them, that the men, of whose lives they profess to give an account, are there described as never sinning. Whereas the holy Scriptures humble the pride of man, no less than they exalt the mercy of God; informing us that the Almighty saw so much guilt, even in those on whom He showered especial favours, that when we, their brother sinners, read in His word the sad account of but some of their transgressions, we find it no easy matter to forgive, or to avoid despising the men, whom the Holy One not only forgave, but exalted to honor; testifying thereby that He, unto whom all hearts are open, hath seen but few, if any, among the children of Adam, less unholy than they. Since Noah, and Jacob, and David, and Solomon, and the apostle Peter, are each described, by *those holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy*

Ghost *, as guilty of transgressing the rules of mere, ordinary, worldly morality, whom we expect to find faithfully described, without having to sorrow over some outward proof, *the imagination of man's heart is evil, from youth* † ?

It doubtless does take off from Wicliffe's story that the fear of persecution should have made him swerve, in this instance, from the straight and perfect uprightness. But let the faithful God be glorified ; who, having promised His aid to such as *are persecuted for righteousness* ‡ withdrew it not ; but bore with the prevarication of His servant Wicliffe, even as He had borne with Abraham, and Isaac, when fear tempted them to offend in the like manner. And as He let them know that had they trusted their safety wholly to His hands, He would have been their sufficient protection, from the evil they dreaded ; so was He graciously pleased to let Wicliffe see, that when he stood out against this temptation, he would find God *faithful*, who, *with the temptation also made a way to escape* §. For He had so won the hearts of the people, that they who had been made furious by the duke of Lancaster's attempts to intimidate their diocesan's court, now came forward to do the like ; pushing their way into the bishop's chapel at Lambeth, and addressing the prelates in Wicliffe's favour. And whilst his judges, in their fear of the people, were hesitating to act, sir Lewis Clifford entered the chapel, and loudly bade the bishop beware of pronouncing sentence against that good man. As sir Lewis was known to be sent by the king's mother, the bishop adjourned the proceedings to a distant place, lest such a decision as the pope expected from

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

† Matt. v. 10.

‡ Gen. viii. 21.

§ 1 Cor. x. 13.

ld bring upon them the indignation both of the
 place and the court, at once. Very soon
 , pope Gregory XI. died; and the ^{Mar. 27,}
 mission under which the bishops had ^{1378.}
 summoned to act, on the trial of Wicliffe, was
 at an end.

he impediments thus thrown in the way of those
 would have prevented Wicliffe from preach-
 were but a part of what the Lord began to do,
 is time, to hinder the church of Rome from
 ching that spark of heavenly light, which,
 gh it was only to smoulder among the flax for
 a hundred and fifty years, was then to burst
 into a flame which should illuminate nation
 nation. Such was the gracious end promoted,
 offering the cardinals to elect the arch-
 op of Bari, thenceforward styled Urban ^{April 8,}
^{1378.}

to be the new pope; so bad a man that
 very persons who had raised him to the papal
 e, from a rank inferior to their own, found his
 ting language and fiery temper so unbearable,
 the majority of them, escaping as they could
 his presence, declared his election void; and
 e the Cardinal of Geneva in his stead.

scuse of this unprecedented step, the ^{Sept.}
 inals asserted, that they were not free ^{20.}

ts, when they elected Urban; but constrained
 it as they then did, by their fears of the Roman
 . Now it was true, that they had been prevented
 he threats of the Romans from choosing some
 chman for pope. But in making choice of
 an VI, they were so far from being guided by
 will of the populace, that they had fled, the
 ent after making their election, to different
 es of security, before they dared venture to let
 Roman people know their choice had fallen
 i Neapolitan. What the cardinals alleged,
 ever, was sufficient to supply the different so-
 ns, of Europe with reasonable grounds, for

requiring their clergy to obey the pope whom it best suited their policy to prefer. Thus as Clement VII, so the last-chosen pope styled himself, took up his residence at Avignon, the king of France felt it his interest to call him the lawful pope; whilst the English government, for that very reason, determined to acknowledge Urban.

As to the characters of the two rivals, the second choice of the cardinals was no improvement on the first. The Cardinal of Geneva had made himself notorious before his elevation, by traversing Italy at the head of one of *the companies*; and by ordering them to massacre the inhabitants of Cesena, who had opened their gates to him on promise of being forgiven, for defending their wives and property from the violence of his hired robbers. "Kill them all. I will have blood, more blood;" cried the unhappy sinner to the wretches who, thus urged on, shed the blood of men and women and children, of monks and priests and nuns, alike; till 5000 of their fellow-creatures had been thus murdered, and no more could be discovered in the reeking city. Such was the man who, after this, took to himself the name of Clement; and to whom kneeling cardinals gave the title of 'holy father.' And yet the prejudices of that age were more shocked by the cruelty of his rival Urban; because the latter put six of his cardinals to the torture, and had five of them, afterwards, tied up in sacks, and tossed into the sea.

The schism thus begun lasted forty years; Urban and Clement being each succeeded by other hostile popes. And the dispute, between these rival heads of the Romish church, occasioned so many wars, and massacres, and atrocious crimes of every kind; that it quite corresponds, in its effects, with what might have been expected from the pouring out one of those *vials full of the wrath of God**, which are

* Rev. xv. 7.

described in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Revelations, as intended to be *poured out upon the seat of the beast*; by which name the Holy Spirit spake of the dominions submissive to the papal power. Whereas *all these things worked together for good to them who loved God* *. For each pope and his partizans proclaimed to the world the wickedness of his rival; so that offences which few would have dared to make known, or to comment upon, became matter of common notoriety during the schism. And as the worldly ends which guided the choice of the cardinals happened to lead them to select exceeding sinners, their guilt, being made thus public, became indeed a snare to the wicked, by hardening them in the belief that all religion was no better than a system of falsehood and deceit; but, on those in whom the love of God produced a righteous horror of iniquity, it had the happy effect of preparing them to hear, that where the Holy Spirit abides not in the heart, there cannot be holiness of life; that His needful help is, however, graciously offered to all such as earnestly ask for it, from their heavenly Father; and that the appointed means, whereby He subdueth the power of sin within us, *the sword of the Spirit, is the word of God* †, approached with prayer, laid up in the heart, and affectionately and reverently spoken of with the lips. To this commanded way of maintaining the life of the soul, by extracting food from *every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God* ‡, the church of Rome, for a while, made no other opposition, than by slandering that holy word, as though it would injure the unlearned, who should look therein. Now, therefore, when the popes would have imperiously forbidden the laity to read the Bible, and would have cut off all such teachers as said, like their Saviour, *search the Scriptures* §, it was most

* Rom. viii. 28.

† Eph. vi. 17.
§ John v. 39.

‡ Matt. iv. 4.

mercifully provided, that the schism should, for a time, break down their power; making each pope afraid to irritate the nations that acknowledged his authority, by any violent use of it, lest they should turn from him to his rival. And also tempting each to make up for the diminution of his revenues, by selling his protection even to those he called heretics; and by suffering his anger to be appeased with fines, instead of taking fiercer vengeance for opposition to his laws.

These beneficial effects were made manifest by such an increase in the numbers willing to listen to Wicliffe, and to those earlier converts who had become his fellow-labourers, that an enemy declares, "half, or more than half the people, joined his sect." This assertion, however, looks like the exaggeration of an angry man. And, strange as it may seem, the same writer could speak in anger of Wicliffe's having "made the Scriptures so common, that they were become more accessible to laymen and women, than they had used to be to intelligent clergymen," nay, to such as he calls "men of letters." Our reformer also found himself, henceforward, exposed to no more danger from the pope; whereas the very year in which the schism ended, the pope and council who brought it to a conclusion, sent an order to England, insisting that Wicliffe's bones should be taken up from their grave; burnt in the fire; and their ashes cast into a river.

Having somewhat anticipated events that passed abroad, to account for a cotemporary change, connected with them at home; which proceeded too gradually, and uniformly, to have its progress distinguished year by year, we resume the thread of our story.

The foreign invasions, with which England was threatened, had passed off, as soon as it became known, abroad, that all ranks of Englishmen were arming to defend their country. But the king's

cles were not willing to desist, with the like audence, from attempting to get possession again the territories which their late father had conquered in France. Their ambition was in great measure shared by the nation. And the parliament had, in consequence, assented to the levying heavy taxes; which had enabled the duke of Lancaster to waste the blood, as well as the treasure of England, in an ineffectual attempt to protect Charles the Bad from the vengeance of the French king. Nor did this failure prevent a brother, the earl of Buckingham, from carrying over another army to Calais, two years after, to march from thence in aid of the duke of Bretagne. This army was in great danger of being cut off; as the rash and unskilful earl had allowed himself to be surrounded, in a disadvantageous position, by the generals of Charles V. But the sudden death of that monarch calling the French generals away to Paris, relieved our countrymen from the presence of their adversaries. The same event, however, made the Bretons change sides. So the English again returned home, dispirited, and dissatisfied; reckoning that their country had gained nothing but the precarious possession of Cherbourg and Brest, by its expensive efforts to support these great vassals of the French crown, in opposition to their sovereign.

There were, however, other consequences of this last expedition, which did not end with its return to the English shore. The parliament had hitherto satisfied every call for money made by king Richard's ministers; after insisting on, and exercising, the right of enquiring how the previously granted subsidies had been spent. They had already once consented to a poll-tax, or tax on heads, imposed with some regard to the different means of the contributors; a duke or archbishop being assessed at 16*l.*; an earl or bishop at 10*l.*; an esquire, an at-

torney, or a beneficed clergyman of 50*l.* a year, at 16*s.*; and every single man, or woman, not living by alms, at 10*d.* But now the Chancellor, Archbishop Simon of Sudbury, informed the Commons, that the crown jewels had been pawned to meet the expence of equipping the earl of Buckingham's army; and that the king was so deeply in debt to that earl and his officers, for arrears of pay, as also to the garrisons of Calais, Brest, Cherbourg, and Bourdeaux, as to stand in need of 400,000*l.* to maintain his honour. This the Commons declared to be "an outrageous and insupportable demand." But at length the clergy agreed to grant the government 16*s.* to be levied on every prelate, priest, monk, or nun; and half-a-crown on every deacon, or inferior member of the church. And then the Commons also consented to a new poll-tax of half-a-crown on every male or female, above fifteen years of age, not living by alms; with a proviso, that the duty should be so levied, in each township, that the rich should aid to make up the sum due from the poor; yet so that no one should have to pay more than 2*l.* 10*s.* for himself and his wife; nor any one less than 10*d.*

It was found, however, that this grant brought less money into the king's exchequer, than the previous lighter poll-tax had done. And the deficiency was attributed to some collusion between the chief payers and receivers. Commissions were, therefore, issued to different persons, authorizing them to make enquiries; and to compel payment from any whom they should discover to have been favoured, or overlooked. One of these commissioners being resisted in Essex, Judge Belknap
 May, 1381. was sent to try the offenders. But the inhabitants of Fobbing rose upon the court; and slew the jurors who had found bills of indictment against their friends. The whole of the country visited by the Commissioners, was now in a state of great

irritation ; their under-agents making the rigour of their scrutiny additionally offensive, by the insolence to which men, entrusted with short-lived authority, seem especially tempted. Hence insurrections broke out in several districts almost at once. From Fobbing the spirit of resistance passed over to the opposite side of the Thames ; where a tax-gatherer, in Dartford, insisting that a tyler's daughter could not be below the taxable age, drew the father's fury upon him, by the grossness of his behaviour to her. The tyler smote him to the ground. And the neighbours, who had been drawn together by the noise of the dispute, declared that Watt the Tyler should be their captain ; and that they would follow him into king Richard's presence, for the redress of their wrongs. The men of Essex, about the same time, put themselves under the guidance of a priest, who took the name of Jack Straw ; as the leader of the Norwich artisans, who were next in arms, concealed his real name, by taking that of Jacky Lister, the old term for a dyer *.

From Dartford, Watt Tyler and his fellow-townsmen drew off into the heart of Kent ; to collect the thousands who felt with them, before they would venture to approach London. And, attacking the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace at Maidstone, they found John Ball imprisoned in its dungeon.

* Gower, who is esteemed the next to Chaucer, among our ancient poets, though certainly exceedingly inferior to him, has described this conspiracy of the lower orders in a Latin poem ; which he entitled *Vox Clamantis*. The following list of the leaders is taken from it, and was written without any intention of being playful.

Watte vocat, cui Tomme venit, neque Symme retardat ;
 Bitteque, Gibbe, simul⁶Hykke, venire jubent.
 Colle furit, quem Gibbe juvat, nocumenta parantes ;
 Cum quibus ad damnum Wille coire vovit.
 Grigge rapit, dum Daive strepit, comes est quibus Hobbe
 Lorkin, et in medio non minor esse putat.
 Hudde ferit quos Judde terit, dum Tibbo juvatur.
 Jakke domosque viros vellit, et ense necat.

For, in the times of chivalry, the Romish prelates felt no more uneasiness than the warlike barons, at holding their sumptuous feasts in chambers beneath whose floors groaned the victims of their power.

The only account we have of Ball's conduct, after his being thus restored to liberty by a riotous populace, comes from his enemies. They tell us, that he harangued the people in language ill becoming a minister of peace; reminding them of their slavery; and exhorting them to throw off the yoke of their oppressors. But the same enemies charge Ball with being the author, and assert that he afterwards confessed himself the author of certain letters sent into Essex; and intended, they say, to excite the lower orders to rebellion. Now these letters are evidently the rambling unconnected expressions of a madman's mind. If his, they put it beyond doubt that the unhappy man left his dungeon with his understanding impaired. This is but too likely to have been the frequent consequence of long confinement in such abodes of misery, as prisons must have been, when cleanliness was scarcely known even in the apartments of the rich; and when he who *was sick and in prison* had none to *visit him*; none to save him, by their remonstrances, from unnecessary hardships; none to intercede, that he might sometimes breathe the fresh air, and see the light of the sun.

The crowd that had joined Watt Tyler, by the time he reached Canterbury, made the insurgents now feel themselves strong enough to march upon London. They were too numerous to be resisted in their progress; and committed many violences by the way. Whilst every town, and village, poured out all its labouring population to swell the multitude. On Blackheath they were met by the commonalty of Surry, Hertfordshire, and Essex; and there they halted, being about 60,000 in number, to wait for the answer which Sir John Molton might

ring them from the king. This gentleman was a courtier, who, with his family, had fallen into their hands by the road. And he was now sent forward alone to the Tower; whither king Richard, and his mother, the Black Prince's widow; Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop and Chancellor; sir Robert Hales, the Treasurer; John of Gaunt's son Henry, Earl of Derby; and about one hundred and eighty knights, had repaired for safety. Being admitted into the Tower, Molton fell on his knees before the king, such was the servile flattery to which a poor boy, under fifteen, was exposed; and said, "My much honoured lord, do not take displeasure at the message I have to deliver. For, dear Sire, I am forced to take the part I do." "Never mind, sir John," replied the king, "speak as you have been desired." "Then, much honoured lord, I am bid to say, that the commonalty of your realm entreat you to go and speak with them at Blackheath. And they desire you to fear no ill from them, as they hold you for their king, and always will. Permit me too, dear Sire, to beg you will at least send them such a message, that they may know I have thus delivered their's to you. For they have retained my children as hostages, till I return to them." "You shall soon have your answer," said the king. And he called upon the nobility around him to consult, what reply should be given. The archbishop and treasurer were for taking measures to put the people down forthwith; and observed, that the king ought not to wait upon a set of "shoeless ribalds." But the majority of the council agreed, that Molton should be sent back with a promise from the king, that, if the people would come down on the morrow, to the side of the Thames, he would meet them there. Nor did the young monarch intend to break his word. But when the royal barge approached Rotherhithe, the uncouth gestures and wild shouts of the mob assem-

bled on the bank of the river, so affrighted the king's attendants, that they were afraid to land him; and the earl of Salisbury, calling out to the people, that they were not in fit array and order for the king to speak with them; bade the rowers turn back to the Tower. The disappointed crowd now became angry. In the hope of being favourably heard by the king, they had been content to pass the night on Blackheath, without pushing forward into the suburbs, though an unprovided multitude could not halt for twenty-four hours on a barren hill, without suffering from the want of food; but they now raised a general cry, "let us on to London." And when sir William Walworth, the Lord Mayor, would have shut the gates on London-bridge, to hinder their entering the city, the populace within rose, and prevented him; so the insurgents
June 13. marched in unopposed; Watt Tyler telling the citizens, they only came to seek out, and punish, traitors to their country. And at first they behaved like men who intended no wrong; their leaders paying for the provisions they needed; and they themselves inflicting immediate punishment on some of their party, who seized a baker's loaves. But the mayor and aldermen, and other rich merchants, thinking to win their good will, and save their houses from being plundered, by setting their cellars open for all comers, thus tempted the poor creatures to drunkenness; a sin which always disposes to further wickedness. Many a slave in this multitude had never before tasted of strong drink; and the effect of the wine upon them, fainting as they were just before from hunger, made them like so many madmen. Yet, though now ready for any violence, they still acted at the bidding of their leaders. And when these led them on to destroy the duke of Lancaster's property, at the Savoy Palace, they abstained so strictly from enriching themselves with the spoils, that they cut the plate into pieces with

heir hatchets, and tossed the fragments into the Thames; and pounded the duke's jewels in a mortar. It should seem too, they had heard, how the archbishop and treasurer had called them "shoeless ibalds;" and a cry had arisen among the crowd, "If they were headless, we should not long be shoeless;" so they proceeded to ransack Lambeth Palace, and the Temple; the latter, because it was the residence of the treasurer, as sir Robert Hales was master of the knights of St. John*. But the day did not close without worse acts of violence, than the destruction of furniture; for the mob slew all the Flemings whom they met in the streets; and at last went so far, as to drag them by tens and twenties from the churches in which they had sought refuge, and then to strike off their heads. As these foreigners were industrious tradesmen, the Kentish or Essex labourers could have had no ground of offence against them. It must have been the spirit of jealousy in the London populace, which produced these murders. And in this they did but follow the ill example of their superiors, the wealthy traders of the city; who, from the like miserable jealousy, had recently caused a great Genoese merchant to be slain before the door of his inn; when he was making arrangements, which would have brought the traffic of the first commercial city in Europe into the English harbours.

The following morning Tower-hill was covered with people, clamouring to have the archbishop and treasurer delivered up to them. And now the young king began to display such courage, and discretion, as were far beyond his years. He desired a herald to bid the people repair to the meadows at Mile-end; and pledged himself that he would meet them there. The greater part of the multitude accordingly moved off to the appointed place; for which the king also left the Tower; approaching it by

* See page 126.

another road, in company with several of the nobility, amongst whom was the earl of Salisbury, and the king's half-brothers, the Hollands; sons of the princess of Wales by a former marriage. When they found themselves in face of, as they supposed 50,000 men, armed with bows, or clubs, or with scythes and hatchets, his brothers, and some of the barons of his retinue, were alarmed; and shrunk back. But Richard went boldly on. "My good people," said he to the insurgents, "I am your king, and your lord; tell me what you want." To which they answered, "We want you to grant us our freedom; so that we and our children may never more be slaves." "I grant it," said the king; "so go home to your different places of abode; and only leave two or three men, from each village or town, to carry my letters after you. They shall be written directly, and sealed with my seal, for the securing of your freedom, and the pardoning of any offences against the law, committed by you up to this hour." This frank manner made the mob think it impossible the handsome youth could mean to deceive them. He was answered with a general cry, "We ask no better." And straightway the multitude before him began to disperse.

But, in the mean while, another large portion of the insurgents, under their leaders, Watt Tyler, and Jack Straw, had entered the Tower; their apparently endless numbers, and their violent clamours, having so terrified the garrison, that though it consisted of 600 men-at-arms, and as many archers, these soldiers had been afraid of attempting to defend their posts. When once within the fortress, they began to ransack every apartment for the unpopular ministers. Some found their way into the king's bed-room; and amused themselves, like children, with lying down on the costly coverlets; others stroked the beards of stately nobles, with their unwashed hands; and bade them be friends

to the commons of England. Another party entered the chamber of the princess dowager, and searching, with their swords, under her couch, so terrified her that she fainted away, and was carried off by her attendants to a boat. But it was when the archbishop and the treasurer were discovered, that the ferocity of the mob displayed itself in all its hideousness. The former had taken his post where it best became him, and where the superstition of his foes was most likely to deter them from violence; near the altar of the Tower chapel; and in his officiating dress, as a minister of religion. But he was violently dragged from the chapel to Tower-hill. His calm and becoming replies, to the abuse poured out upon him, were unheeded. He, and sir Robert Hales, with Legge, late commissioner in Kent, were quickly beheaded; and their heads, being fixed on lances, were carried, in savage triumph, into the city. Farther demands were now made upon the king; as that no land should be let for more than ten-pence an acre; that every man should be at liberty to fish in any pond, to catch game in any wood or forest, and hares in any field; and that all men might buy or sell, in what market they chose. To these requests, thus made, the king could give no denial; and he had thirty clerks kept at work, all night, preparing his promised letters; that the country people might have no excuse for remaining in London another day.

Richard himself, however, had quitted the Tower at night-fall, to join his mother in their servants' apartments at the wardrobe, Carter-lane. The next morning it was found that Watt Tyler had kept together the Kentish rioters; but that most of the others had departed homewards. The king, therefore, sent, and offered him the same charters as had satisfied the men of Essex; and, on his refusing to accept them, Richard expressed his wish to meet the men of Kent in Smithfield, and to hear

what more they wanted. Tyler, accordingly, drew off his men from plundering the houses of the officers of justice; and collected them in Smithfield, to the number, as it is said, of 20,000 men. And thither the king also repaired, accompanied by no more than sixty men-at-arms. As soon as the latter entered the field, sir John Newton was sent forward, to desire Tyler would come up to the king's party. To this request Tyler gave his assent; but in the haughty manner of one who, measuring with his eye the disproportion between the numbers of their respective followers, considered himself a more important personage than his sovereign; letting Newton know, that he thought his manner not sufficiently respectful. As this provoked the knight to angry words in return, they both approached the king, chafing with indignation at each other, and with their hands upon their daggers. "Give me up thy dagger;" cried Tyler. "Give it him," said the king; who wished to have no brawl about trifles, with a man whose beck governed such an host, as he saw before him. "Take it then," rejoined Newton; "but if thou and I were elsewhere, thou wouldest not have dared to use the language thou hast to me; no, not for as much gold as would fill that monastery;" pointing to St. Bartholomew's. "I'll not eat this day, till I have thy head;" replied Tyler, choaking with rage. Whilst he was uttering these presumptuous words, Walworth, the mayor, and several aldermen arrived; with their armour on under their cloaks; having followed the king, in alarm for his safety. Hearing the loud words of wrath, Walworth pushed his horse close up to the king, who was himself becoming agitated, and said, "Arrest him, mayor." But Walworth went beyond the command; and struck Tyler such a blow on the head, that he fell from his horse; and was, the next minute, run through the body, by one of the king's attendants.

All this had passed too quickly for his followers to run in upon the king's party, and save their chief. But when they saw him fall, thousands of voices exclaimed, "They have killed our captain, let us lay them all." It was at this moment that Richard insisted none of his escort should follow him; and then rode directly up to the foremost rank of the insurgents, who were already stringing their bows. "What is all this, my men?" said he, "What are you doing? Would you shoot your king? Why should you take ill the death of a traitor? Here am I, ready to be your captain. Follow me into the fields; and whatever you wish you shall have." The headless mob knew not what to think, nor how to act; but, used to be commanded, those under his eye began to move, as he led them; and the next followed after, without asking each other why.

In the mean time Walworth, and the others of the king's party, had ridden back into the city, which Watt Tyler had emptied of the rioters; and calling out, as they rode along different streets, that the king was a dead man, if not rescued forthwith, they were quickly joined by numbers of knights and wealthy merchants, who had been keeping watch within their own doors; ready armed for the defence of their property, or to fight their way through a mob. Sir Robert Knolles, an experienced commander, put himself at their head. And they sallied out of the city 1000 strong, in search of the king; whom they found near Islington, still riding in front of the poor deluded rabble. At the sight of such a body of men in armour, preparing to charge upon them, the crowd began to fling away their own rude weapons, and fled in every direction; leaving the king to gallop off, and join sir Robert. And now several, who had shewn no courage in his cause before, pressed to be allowed to cut off the heads of some two hundred of the defenceless men, whose bows and clubs, they

perceived, had been cast away. But the king could not help feeling, that he must appear in a most disgraceful light before his subjects, if he should thus, quickly, turn round to hunt for the lives of those, whom his fair words had induced, not only to spare his life, but to obey him, when he had no power to compel obedience. Richard, therefore, not only refused to allow the needless slaughter of the flying crowds; but, returning to London, he signed a charter giving the Kentish men the same exemptions from slavery, as he would have allowed them before Watt Tyler perished. Whilst he also issued a proclamation, commanding all strangers from the country to quit London before the close of that day, on peril of their lives.

Thus was this seemingly resistless multitude entirely defeated, and broken up by the conduct of a boy; after it had got possession of the metropolis, of the Tower, and of the king's person. The main object of the people in rising had been but to insist they might no longer be treated as slaves. But in the pursuit of their object, they had shown a wicked indifference to the shedding of blood. It was the merciful will of God, that the humblest in our land should yet know the sweets of liberty; but such a blessing was not to be hastened by the guilt of those who coveted it; nor was it to come as the reward of rebellion. The possession of power over the lives and fortunes of their fellow-creatures is a most fearful snare, even to those to whom authority is familiar; and it was every moment goading the upstarts, at the head of the multitude, to some greater crime*.

* It is asserted by the monkish chroniclers, that the insurgents made schoolmasters take an oath, never to teach boys grammar again,—that the sight of an inkhorn, which scholars carried at their side, was enough to make them doom its bearer to death—and that Tyler's last demand was, to have a commission granted him in the king's name, for cutting off the heads

The Almighty has taught us in his holy word, that, "He doth dispose and turn the hearts of kings, as it seemeth best to His godly wisdom." And it had pleased Him so to dispose, and turn, the heart of the youthful king of England, as had enabled the boy to act with wisdom which neither belonged to his years, nor to his natural character. Nor was this gracious interference, of the Governor of the whole earth, more conspicuous, from its remarkable contrast to every other part of Richard's behaviour through life, than it was seasonable. For the melting away of that great body of insurgents, who had united to seize the capital and intimidate the king, not only saved London from being ruined by a multitude, whose self-command was rapidly yielding to various temptations; but the mere news of its dispersion served to break up the other bodies of insurgents, who had been encouraged by its first successes, and had already overpowered the nobility, the abbots, and the king's officers, from Winchester to Scarborough. All now slunk, dispirited, back to their homes. Being put down without bloodshed, in, perhaps, every district except Norfolk.

The bishop of that diocese, Henry Spencer, had obtained his promotion from pope Urban VI.; who had shewn either his ignorance or his contempt of the word of God, which says *a bishop must be no striker**, by making him bishop of Norwich expressly for being a fearless striker; he having served that pope in his wars. The bishop was absent from his see, residing at his manor of Burley,

of all attornies, barristers, and others "learned in the law." But these exaggerated charges of barbarism are at variance with other statements of the same writers; which prove the insurgents to have been remarkably anxious, to have all the concessions made to them duly enrolled, and secured by charters drawn up with the due forms of law.

* 1 Tim. iii. 3.

near Oakham, when he heard that the commons of Norfolk had risen under Lister; who took upon him to imitate the state of a prince, obliging a knight to be his carver, and taste his meat before him. With a few soldiers, whom he had about him at the time, the bishop set off directly for Norwich, and at Icklingham, not far from Newmarket, he encountered two knights with three bondmen in their company, all sent by Lister to wait on the king with a present of money, and request that he would grant charters of freedom to his poor slaves in Norfolk. The knights betrayed their companions to the bishop, as leading men among the insurgents; and he made them turn back with him till he halted at Wymondham, within his own diocese. He then ordered them, as their prelate, to confess all their sins before him; whereby he might learn the intentions of their party. Confession ended, he had their heads struck off; though he had no authority from the law of the land to condemn any to death, and was positively forbidden by the laws of his own church from sharing in any such condemnation *. After this feat the bishop rode on to Norwich; and putting off his priest's vestments for the armour of a knight, he exhorted the gentry of his flock to fight by his side. Lister and his followers were then at Walsham, waiting the result of their message to the king. But the bishop would allow of no truce; offered them no terms; and resolved to give them no opportunity of returning to their former occupations in peace. He pushed on to Walsham, and was among the first to force his way into the town, pushing aside their ill-contrived barriers, and then cutting down as many poor creatures as he could reach with a two-edged sword. Lister had leaped from the wall, and hid himself in a corn-field. But he was soon discovered,

* See Vol. i. p. 379.

and hung with several more, by the bishop's command, at Norwich.

The employment of king Richard, as an instrument in the hands of God for the preventing of much evil, does not seem to have been intended as any especial blessing to himself. He was to be left again to his own infirmities; that through his sins those of the people might receive their chastisement. When Richard saw how wonderful a change, in the face of affairs, he had been the means of bringing about; he was naturally tempted to admire his own sagacity and courage; and consequently, to become rash, and impatient of opposition. His uncle, the duke of Lancaster, was on the frontiers of Scotland, settling the terms of a two years' truce with king Robert Stuart*; and had sought protection at Edinburgh, when he heard of the fury of the English populace against himself. The other uncles of the king were near Plymouth; about to embark on a foreign quarrel. And his two chief counselors had been slain. So that there was no one left about him, except his too fond mother, who could take authority to check his pride. On the other hand, he heard himself praised to the skies, for what had lately passed, by all who approached him. The knights and gentry too now poured in from every county, to rally round the king in a cause which so deeply concerned them; soon forming a voluntary army, rated by the courtiers at 40,000 men, all mounted and fully armed; and this knightly host cheered Richard, as he reviewed them on Blackheath; declaring their readiness to march

* A daughter of king Robert Bruce had married the hereditary steward of Scotland, a great officer of state. And when David Bruce died, without children, the crown of Scotland passed to Robert, the eldest son of this daughter; whose family had the name of Stuart, from their office, as they spelt it; though sometimes written Stewart, by such as chose to spell more after the English fashion.

any where under his command. *All these things were against him**. Far more truly so, than ever afflictions were against any one.

A week after the slaying of Watt Tyler, the king moved to Waltham. And as he knew not how
 June 22. to take proper measures for supplying his army, it so injured the neighbourhood that one of his company declared, a few days after their arrival, there was neither grass, nor hay, nor corn in either fields or barns, for five miles round. Every thing eatable being seized; and every thing on the ground trampled down, if it had not been cut for the horses of the king's host. Whilst he was here, the people of Essex, collecting again at Billericay, sent messengers to Richard, to ask whether he proposed allowing them to be as free men as their lords were; according to what had been promised them. But they found the king an altered person. He addressed them himself, and told them, they were "odious wretches, undeserving to live." But that, coming as messengers, they should be safe as such; and might carry back this answer to their fellows. "Slaves you were; and are. But the bondage that awaits you shall be incomparably worse than aught you have complained of. As long as we live and reign, we will strive with all our means and strength, to make your slavery such, that after ages may talk of it; and that they who see your misery may be terrified from doing the like."

Had this poor youth been trained to read the Scriptures, the history of Rehoboam†, might have terrified him from doing the like to that foolish prince; by insulting a great and discontented portion of his subjects, with a declaration that he meant to act the tyrant. But Richard followed up this unfeeling, and shameless language, by ordering two

* Gen. xlii. 36.

† Compare 2 Chron. x.

noblemen to follow the route of the messengers; and "check the audacity of the Essex commons." For this purpose, as none would stay to combat them, these lords watched the outlets of the forest, and slew 500 men, without inquiring into their deserts. The king then advanced to Chelmsford; from whence he issued a proclamation, annulling ^{July 2.} the charters he had lately signed; and requiring all such as had obtained them from him, to bring them back forthwith; that they might be cancelled. He at the same time selected sir Robert Tresilian for chief justice; and commissioned him to traverse the country, and try all persons charged with having perpetrated any offences during the late troubles. The populace were now sufficiently daunted, to submit to the arrest of their leaders. And Tresilian was a bold bad man; capable of either frightening, or imposing on the juries, till they condemned every man whom he chose to hang. Among those brought before him at St. Alban's was John Ball, who had been found at Coventry; and the sentence of high treason being passed against him, Tresilian had it executed upon the old man, in the full extent of its hideous cruelty. In the next parliament, as ^{July 15.} its members all belonged to classes interested in rejecting the claims of the late insurgents, acts were passed, to sanction every illegal violence, committed by the bishop of Norwich, and others, in opposing the rioters; and to annul every concession that had been made to them*.

Having taken such steps as they chose, to pre-

* The earl of Northumberland came to this parliament with a large train of followers, to defend him, if needful, from the duke of Lancaster; who was accompanied in the like manner. And the Londoners, to show their hostility to the latter, gave the earl leave to use the pastures between Holborn and the Strand, and where the Haymarket and Oxford Road are at present; to fatten the herds which had been driven up with him, from Northumberland, for the supply of his household during the session.

vent the people from rising again, it was fitting the statesmen should look about them, to consider what had led the whole of the labouring population to unite as one man, for the obtaining of relief from that bondage under which their forefathers had lived for ages; and which had been gradually becoming less oppressive. The irritating effect of the poll-tax, had been only like the spark which falls upon a heap of combustibles. It had made them burst into a flame; but they had been prepared by previous causes. This was made evident, when the insurgents declared the grievances to which they would no longer submit. For the poll-tax was then passed over, as not worth disputing about. In reality, no political event could open the eyes of the populace to their situation, without tempting them to rebellion. They would seem to themselves the strongest body in the state. For they were ten to one the most numerous; and their ill-educated lords had but little superiority in knowledge to make up for this. And yet they found themselves slaves to men born in the same country, talking now the same language, having the same complexion and the same religion. They were also forced, as slaves, to toil when bidden without pay, for the gentleman their neighbour; who could better afford to give them pay, than any other neighbour. This unnatural state of society, made still more galling in France by the exceeding wretchedness of the bondmen and the rapacity of their masters, had driven the French peasantry to make a furious effort for emancipation about 50 years before*. And in several French provinces, the citizens had recently been goaded by oppression, into a fresh contest with their rulers. In Flanders too, an obstinate war had been going on for some months, between the citizens and commons, and their earl. A struggle for liberty, this

* See p. 245.

absolutely begun and maintained on the opposite continent, could not but lead the English peasants to ask each other, why they submitted to such bondage as the French and Flemings, whom king Edward's victories made them think their inferiors in courage, were willing to cast away their lives rather than suffer any longer. Yet the English lords had been better masters to their vassals than the French had *; and hence the English populace, in their short struggle for freedom, had neither displayed nor felt much of that revengeful ferocity, which had maddened the first French insurgents.

Notwithstanding, however, its being thus notorious, that similar insurrections had raged on the continent, where the opinions of Wicliffe were wholly unknown to the people, the Romish churchmen asserted that the spreading of Wicliffe's doctrines had been the main cause of the late general rise of the English populace. That Wicliffe, like the apostle of old, should be spoken against, as a *pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition* †, was to be expected. Mankind love to persuade themselves, that they know and think enough about religion. And whoever disturbs the spiritual sloth of the worldly man, by crying out, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead*, may add the gracious offer, *and Christ shall give thee light* ‡; yet will he not escape being calumniated as one who would *turn the world upside down* §.

Unhappily, however, Wicliffe had given his enemies but too much ground for charging him with teaching doctrines hostile to the security of property. For, whereas the English prelates had been wont to boast, that the church held its possessions by the tenure of *franc almoigne*, or free alms, meaning that they had been given to it free from all burdensome duties to the state ||; Wicliffe had

* See vol. I. p. 486.

† Eph. v. 14.

‡ Acts xvii. 6.

§ Acts xxiv. 6.

|| See p. 73.

asserted, that the tithes and rents paid to ecclesiastics were indeed free alms, and might as such be withheld, if the payer knew his minister to be a bad man. He is said to have also argued that, whereas all property is a trust from God, to be employed to His honor, the sinner has proved himself unworthy of such trust; and stands, therefore, convicted of having forfeited his property. Whilst arguing thus, Wicliffe seems not to have observed, how dangerous a snare it would be to the payer of tithes or other dues, and how contrary to the most obvious rule for the obtaining of justice, to allow him to be judge in his own cause; and to decide for himself whether he ought to pay his minister, or keep the money for his own use. And as to the forfeiture of property by sin, it is evident that if every sin deprives the sinner of all right to any worldly possessions, there is no man who hath not sinned; and, therefore, no man who hath not lost his rights to any property. But when our Lord said, *my kingdom is not of this world**, he left it to magistrates and rulers to decide, what offences should be punished by forfeiture of worldly goods.

The promulgation of these opinions brought Wicliffe and his followers into much disrepute; being now thought exceedingly mischievous, by persons who had not been disposed to cavil at them on their first publication. The heads of the university of Oxford, afraid of sharing the unpopularity of a man, whom so many charged with having occasioned the late rebellion, declared Wicliffe a preacher of heresies; and threatened him, and all who should listen to him, with the curses of the church. And when he would have appealed to the king through the duke of Lancaster, that duke, equally afraid of increasing the clamour against himself, told Wicliffe he must expect no support either from him or the

* John xviii. 36.

wn, if he chose to stand out against his ecclesiastical superiors on articles of belief. He, therefore, withdrew, finally and entirely, from the university his parish of Lutterworth. As, however, the threatened curse did not at all abate the zeal of his disciples, who traversed the country barefooted and russet gowns, like the friars, preaching in the churches, or, if hindered from that, in the streets, the clergy hazarded an unprecedented step to procure a law against them. It was now usual to summon the clergy to grant the church's money, almost regularly as the commons were called upon to grant that of the nation; and being thus assembled, the clergy petitioned the king to make a law, for commissioning the sheriffs to apprehend and imprison all preachers of heresy and their abettors, whenever the prelates should certify that such interference was needed. And the king had the words of this petition formed into an act, and enrolled among the statutes; as he was wont to do with 1382. petitions of the commons, if acceptable to a*. The custom of filling up the statute roll at the end of the session, naturally brought any irregularities in it under the consideration of the parliament next summoned; and the commons then represented to the king, that this statute having been made without their consent, neither they nor their successors ought to be bound by the will of the clergy; and, therefore, they prayed that the aforesaid statute might be repealed. The answer to this petition said, "It is repealed accordingly." Yet so was, that, by some fraudulent management of the popish clergy, the statute complained of remained part of the law of the land; and its repeal was not entered upon the rolls.

It is not to be wondered, that the popish clergy could have thought fraud allowable; when it might

* See p. 295.

contribute to the putting down of those they called heretics. For pope Urban VI. had sent a bull to

Mar. 30,
1382.

England, for the instruction of all the members of his church; in which he bade them observe "as they feared the wrath of Almighty God," that all leagues and agreements made with either schismatics, or heretics, were utterly null and void——And that the parties to any such agreements, were altogether released from any obligation to abide by them; even though made before either of the contracting parties or person was infected with heresy; though confirmed with an oath, or by any other pledge; nay, though expressly sanctioned and ratified by apostolic authority, as he called his own. And he was daring enough to add, that his anxiety for the souls of the faithful made it his duty, strictly to prohibit all persons from observing any such agreements; and those in authority, from permitting others to stand to their covenants with heretics. The Holy Spirit has declared it to be one of the marks of the man whom God approves, that even if *he sweareth to his own hurt, he changeth not**. But this bull was evidently drawn up in the spirit of that unhappy being, who, *when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it*†. It is so directly opposed to the principles of common honesty, taught even by those who care not that their lives "be pure and holy;" that it is revolting to the opinions of all civilized society. Hence the papists of modern times loudly declare, that they feel it their duty to keep faith with those they think heretics. But by this declaration they confess, what their church generally denies, that a pope may be mistaken in the doctrine which he authoritatively lays down. For Urban VI., though only acknowledged by part of the Romish clergy and

* Ps. xv. 4.

† John viii. 44.

ality, during his lifetime; is now held by all its members to have been the true and lawful head of their whole church.

By *schismatics*, Urban meant the adherents of his rival, pope Clement. But as to treating them in the base manner enjoined, in the papal bull, king Richard's ministers resolved to take it for their guide, or disobey it, as should best suit their political views. Thus the Scotch acknowledging pope Clement, because their allies the French did, such natives of Scotland as had repaired to Oxford, for the purpose of study, were about to be proceeded against, as schismatics, in the vice-chancellor's court, when a letter was sent to the University, in the king's name, insisting Dec. 5,
1382. that the Scotch students should be allowed to retain their own opinions, as to who might be the lawful pope, without being disquieted by any persons on that account*. Whereas the very next day a proclamation was issued, under the king's signature, calling upon all sheriffs and mayors to aid the bishop of Norwich in raising recruits for a crusade, against the adherents of pope Clement; because these crusaders were to invade France. And as pope Urban chose to assert that he had a right to deprive the Spanish king of Castile of his

* About two years after this the government felt it necessary to send another official letter; requiring the chancellor of Oxford to take strong measures for the prevention of the quarrels, and combats, between the students from the South and North of England; who lived apart, and hated, and insulted each other, like natives of different and hostile kingdoms. It was the observation of these narrow-minded provincial prejudices, which induced so many benevolent founders of colleges to insist, that there should not be more than a specified number of fellows from any English county at the same time. For they perceived, that if the members from any one county should get the lead in a college, they would distribute among their own countrymen alone, if not restrained, the rewards intended to encourage piety, industry, and learning, in whomsoever found.

crown, for acknowledging Clement, and would give it to the duke of Lancaster; the duke added this donation to his old claim upon that kingdom; and was encouraged by the English government, in preparing to lead another crusade into Spain.

By bestowing the name of crusaders, upon those who should serve in these military expeditions, the pope tempted them to believe, that they would be regarded in heaven as the soldiers of Christ; and would be entitled to the same *indulgences*, that is, to the same vain promises of having their sins forgiven, as the defenders of the holy land. On hearing of these things, Wicliffe remarked, "where shall we see the proud priest of Rome grant full indulgences, to engage men to live in peace and charity; as he does to engage Christians to murder each other?" With his knowledge of Scripture the good man could not but be shocked at the force of words, in which every priest, throughout England, was required to proclaim to his parishioners, that the bishop of Norwich, or his deputies, had the authority from the pope to grant forgiveness of sins to as many as should join, or contribute freely to the expense of his crusade. "By the authority of the apostles we absolve thee," says the granter of the indulgence in the words of this form, "from all thy sins confessed with thy mouth, and mourned for in the heart; and also from those which thou wouldst have confessed, if thou hadst remembered them. And we indulge thee with the full remission of thy sins; and promise thee the reward of the righteous, and an increase of thy eternal happiness." The Holy Spirit hath said, *follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*. But this bishop offered his countrymen the forgiveness of their sins, and the reward of the righteous, for money; without insisting on holiness. And

ted them to earn these blessings by strife; instead of insisting that a fierce and turbulent generation should *follow peace with all men*. Such as heard nothing of the word of GOD, rejoiced at these things. Old soldiers of Edward III. were glad to find that the sins of their past campaigns might be washed out by fighting the French again, under so good a leader as bishop Spencer. And monks and nuns, whom he was authorised by the pope to release, for the occasion, from the bondage of their order's rules, delighted in the thoughts of winning money, and yet indulge in the coarse licence of the times.

Whilst females, and the luxurious, and the idle, willingly sent the bishop money, or jewels, to obtain in exchange such pardon for their sins, as they thought more secure than their parish priest could bestow; and such as the latter, if a conscientious man, would not have bestowed, without enjoining the penance which his church affixed to their offences.

Hence the bishop got together so much treasure, and such an army, that parliament advised Richard to let him have the produce of certain taxes, on his engaging to find the king of France such employment, in defending his own country, as should protect that monarch from overwhelming the people of Flanders; who had besought the English to protect them.

It was in the month of May, 1383, that the bishop mustered his forces in Calais; where he listened to emptying accounts of the wealth to be found in the neighbouring Flemish towns; whilst he knew that Flanders had been so ruined, by the English wars, as to afford no hope of any valuable booty. Having fear of GOD before his eyes, the temptation made him indifferent to the manifest iniquity of his purpose; so, instead of marching through the gate which led to France, the bishop turned his face towards Flanders; and, crossing the borders, he

quickly took Gravelines by storm. As the Flanders was at peace with England, and part of his territories had not thrown off authority, some of the earl's officers repaired, day, to the bishop's quarters; to ask the so unprovoked an invasion. They found that of Gravelines entirely pillaged; the vesse harbour taken possession of, as prizes; the part of the male inhabitants massacred; and learnt that though the women and children had refuge in a convent, its consecrated walls had allowed to protect them from the brutal violence of an army, in which every soldier wore the cross, in token of his being peculiarly in the supposed service of Christ. The first which suggested itself to the bishop, for inflicted these calamities on an unoffending was, That he understood their earl to be not master of this country; since it had been ceded by the king of France. But when the lord offered evidence, that the king had only acted as the earl's ally, the bishop said—He had nothing with the arrangements of temporal prince; he was the soldier of pope Urban; and had a right to make war on all who acknowledged Clement as their pope. To this they replied, that they and their countrymen, had espoused the pope Urban as publicly, and as sincerely, as they themselves. "It matters not," said the earl, "Yolande, duchess of Bar, has property in your neighbourhood; and she is for Clement." Receiving, then, that it was vain to expect justice from him, the earl's officers declared they would depart forthwith, and appeal to the king of England, to which the bishop gave immediate orders preventing their departure. His next advance was in possession of Dunkirk; but, by this time the peasantry and citizens had taken up arms in defence, and being joined by such knights as

arms as happened to be near, they made an attack upon the English; in which, however, they were utterly routed, with the loss of five or six thousand killed. The volleys of arrows shot by the English archers had gained this victory; but, when the Flemings were once broken, it was easy to slay men who dared not stop to fight; and an English monk, who has recorded the events of this crusade, declares with great exultation, that rectors and cars, and monks and friars, who had quitted their abbeys in England, under the pope's sanction, to follow bishop Spencer, so distinguished themselves in the slaughter, that "there were some of these religious men, who were ascertained to have cut down, each, their sixteen Flemings." This may well be imagined to be a vain boast of more crimes than the unhappy sinners were capable of committing. But that which deserves attention is the deplorable blindness, which could lead the sworn servants of the meek and holy Jesus to boast, and his writer to think he did them honor by relating, that they had stained their hands so deeply in the blood of their fellow-Christians; whose country they invaded, and he too a bishop, had invaded without warning or provocation; and whose only crime was, that they had come forward to fight in defence of the rights of their sovereign, of their own lives and property, and of the chastity of their wives and daughters.

When the news of this victory, and of the great spoil which the crusaders were gathering, reached England, numbers more, both of the monks and knights, sewed a red cross upon their shoulders; and crossed the sea, to join in this attack upon a friendly people, whose country they robbed of every thing that could be carried off; till the king of France marched an army to the earl's aid; and forced this horde of robbers to return to England.

The bishop, and some of his chief officers, were then called to account, by parliament; the latter were heavily fined; and the bishop was deprived, for two years, not of that holy office which he was so unworthy to occupy, but of the rents of all estates belonging to his see. Yet these sentences were not inflicted on them for the guilt which might justly have brought the wrath of God upon their country. The only charge made against the condemned officers was, that they had taken bribes from the king of France, to draw off their army. While the bishop was punished for having let the crusade come to an end, sooner than had been agreed upon, when a part of the taxes was made over to him.

The plan which pope Urban had devised, for exciting a civil war in Spain, equally disappointed his expectations; for the duke of Lancaster was too much employed at home, to follow up the pope's pretended gift of the crown of Castile. And when three years after, he found an opportunity of landing an army in the north of Spain, the king of Castile had the prudence to convert the duke into a friend, by marrying his eldest son to a daughter of John of Gaunt, the heiress to Pedro's claims*; and by farther allowing the duke 232,000*l.* for his expences, and an annuity of 15,500*l.* for life. By this arrangement the duke returned to England so wealthy, that the overgrown possessions of the house of Lancaster made all king Richard's friends exceedingly jealous of its power, and eventually tempted the duke's son to rebellion, usurpation, and murder.

In the mean time the long war with France had been interrupted, shortly after the bishop of Norwich's retreat, by a truce; made at first for a few

* See page 281.

aths only, but afterwards renewed. Yet as the
 g of Scotland refused, for a while, to be com-
 mended in this truce, the French king thought
 ue to his alliance with Scotland to send John de
 ne, admiral of France, to his aid. This officer
 accompanied by 1000 knights and esquires of
 nce, with their attendants; and he brought
 our sufficient for equipping 1200 more, besides
 pply of 40,000 francs to enable the Scotch to
 are for a campaign. But the lowlands had been
 waste, only a little before, by John of Gaunt;
 had cut down all the woods, and burnt the
 ants' huts; though he spared Edinburgh, in re-
 for its having afforded him shelter during Watt
 er's insurrection. The desolation of the only
 ile portion of their country had so impoverished
 Scotch nobles, that the king requested De
 ne to distribute his 40,000 francs among them
 hwith. And the French complained that they
 ld not purchase a horse, for less than six times
 price a Scotchman would have been asked;
 the lords of Scotland avoided their acquaintance,
 ave the expence of shewing them hospitality;
 that, after having been used to comfortable beds,
 ished halls, and handsome rooms, they could ill
 ok remaining for months in so poor a capital as
 inburgh, a town not to be compared with cities
 ible note in France.

The want of cordiality thus complained of by the
 uch, may have partly arisen from the dislike of
 ay of the Scotch nobles to their sovereign's policy,
 not making peace with England. This extended
 far, that Douglas, Earl of Galloway, joined the
 el of Northumberland in arranging, and signing,
 ruce for the borders, without asking for
 sovereign's leave; which agreement is far-
 r deserving of notice, as being the first
 ublic document, in the English language, to be
 und in the national collection of treaties since the

Mar. 15,
1384.

burgh, Leith, and Dundee to ashes, pushed forward his advanced troops as far as deen, without heeding the progress of the English and French, who had passed by him to pillage the Lowland ; when his favourites, Robert de Virey, of Oxford, and Michael de la Pole the Chamberlain, suggested to him, that the Duke of Lancaster craftily drawing him on, in the hope that he might be cut off in some difficult pass. Their hints entered the king's mind with such jealousy, that, though having entered the royal tent, to lay before him a plan for turning back, by another route, to Vienne and the Scotch with him, Richard III. replied, " Uncle of Lancaster, you will misadvise me. You may go with your men where you think best. I with mine, shall return straight to England." " And I shall follow you," rejoined the Duke ; " for there is not a man, in your country who loves you so well as I and my brother, if any one but yourself, shall say, I wish you were not mine, yours other than well, I pledge myself to remain in the field." The king made no reply to this, but bade the people about him make ready, for

of Marquess of Dublin, to which he soon after the indiscretion to add that of Duke of Ireland. John of Gaunt had been the only duke ever since the death of the Duke of Clarence, it was the King's design to lower his importance by elevating his two younger brothers to the same rank with himself. To mortify the Duke of Lancaster still farther, Edward, having now been married three years to Princess Anne of Bohemia without any hope of issue, took occasion to declare in Parliament, that Earl Mortimer was to be regarded as the lawful heir to the crown of England; being grandson, by daughter, to John of Gaunt's elder brother, the Duke of Clarence.

It was in the next year that the Duke sailed for Spain, with 20,000 men; the king gladly accompanying him both troops and money, for the ^{June,} 1386, of getting rid of his presence. But John of Gaunt had the reputation, abroad, of being an experienced warrior; and it was taken for granted that the bravest men-at-arms, among the English, would leave their country, to share the profit and glory of his Spanish campaigns. The young king therefore was, therefore, advised to take advantage of his absence for attempting the conquest of England; and as this project was popular with the people, who longed to be revenged for past injuries, he made every possible effort to meet the wishes of his sovereign. He fixed upon Sluys, as the place from whence the invading army should embark; and thither the nobles, and knights, and military adventurers repaired, to the number of 100; besides a countless crowd of attendants and of armed followers. No less than thirteen hundred and fifty vessels were collected, to transport this force across the sea. A wooden town was also constructed, 30 paces in circuit, and surrounded by strong ramparts; which being taken to pieces, and moved with the army, was to ensure the King comfort-



These immense preparations, however, exhaust the French king's treasury, with money that extraordinary taxes could drain from willing people. By the artful management of the Duke de Berry, uncle to Charles VI., who was opposed to the expedition, it was prevented from sailing till the approach of winter made it imprudent to declare, they could not hope to keep suc- cessful together at sea. And the greater part of the fleet had brought any money with them, having no time, spent it all, could neither remain in the neighbourhood which was utterly ruined by the ravages of this undisciplined host, nor maintain themselves in any country, which they were not at liberty to pillage; so that, when the king found him- self constrained to announce, that the embarkation was put off till the following spring, every one returned back to his own home. The provisions, which had been hitherto hoarded, were then sold at a great loss; and the owners of such vessels as had been impressed made for their own ports, but were all of them captured by the English fleet, under the command of the Earl of Arundel. Three French ships laden

ral supply for the purpose ; the Commons perceived, that it was necessary to insist on the removal of those counsellors, who flattered every folly their young sovereign, instead of teaching him to use his people frugally.

The king had withdrawn from London to Eltham, when the Commons sent to request he would dismiss the Earl of Suffolk, from the office of Chancellor, as they had much to allege against him. To which he haughtily replied, "that he would not remove a meanest scullion in his kitchen to please them." His answer was the more offensive, as the extravagance of his household was one of the evils which the Commons felt it necessary to check. For he had three hundred servants in his kitchen ; and every office about the Palace was proportionably filled with attendants, whose costly dresses were an astonishment of that gaudy age. The king was, therefore, told in return, that Parliament would not proceed with any other business, till he chose to make his appearance in the House, and attend to its request. Richard then desired, that forty knights might be deputed to inform him, more clearly, what was desired to do. But the Commons refused to send any such deputation ; declaring their belief that the courtiers, about the king's person, had the treacherous intention of slaying, or at least of seizing the persons of so many leading members of their House. Still the king held out ; and the Duke of Gloucester, with Arundel, bishop of Ely, were sent to inform him, that, if he should absent himself any days more, the members might lawfully, and would, return to their own homes, without voting any subsidy. To this Richard petulantly replied, "that he would rather call in the help of the king of France, and submit to him, if needs must be, than buckle to his own subjects." On which they bluntly observed, that if he chose to make himself a stranger to his people, refusing to govern according to the

laws, and the advice of the peers, he might be driven from his throne. This threat, and the necessity which his debts laid him under, of obtaining a grant of money, brought him back to London; and obliged him to meet the wish of Parliament, by making

Oct. 23. bishop Arundel chancellor *, and consenting to other changes in the great offices of state. The Commons then proceeded to impeach the Earl of Suffolk; that is, they brought him to trial before the Lords, for sundry acts, which they declared to be offences against the welfare of the kingdom.

Richard now found that he had taken an imprudent step, in raising the Duke of Gloucester to counterbalance the influence of the Duke of Lancaster. For the latter was one of those men, who haughtily insist on the most humble submission from all below them; and then reckon it a point of honour to be ostentatiously respectful to any undoubted superior in rank. Whereas the Duke of Gloucester would fall in with all the prejudices of the vulgar, to obtain popularity. And then thought himself independent; because he was not afraid of saying rough and insulting things to his sovereign.

After the Earl of Suffolk had been tried, and found guilty on a part of the charges, and condemned thereupon to a fine and imprisonment, the Duke of Gloucester's influence was employed in carrying a measure through Parliament, which much resembled the appointment of the Lords Ordainers,

* The king soon after issued a notice, stating that, whereas the see of Ely had no lands belonging to it near London, he thereby allotted the villages and manors of Hackney and Layton for the reception of the bishop's servants, and the pasturing of his horses, whilst he should be in attendance on the court. And all officers and servants of the king, or others, were, by the same notice, prohibited from taking any hay, litter, corn, poultry, or cattle, from the inhabitants of Hackney or Layton, without the bishop's leave.

the reign of Edward of Caernarvon *. It was by calling for a copy of the act whereby that monarch had been deposed, that the Commons terrified Richard into assenting to their new demand; which was, that the Dukes of York and Gloucester, the Earl of Arundel, and eight others, should have authority under his seal for enquiring into all abuses, and punishing offenders, out of the reach of the law, by their own sentence; which the king should be bound to confirm.

This unusual power was only to last a twelve-month; but Richard, misled by his favourites, left London for the distant counties, that he might not be under the eye of these commissioners; and then Chief Justice Tresilian, with the Earl of Suffolk and Archbishop of York, laid before him a scheme for taking off the controul, under which Parliament had placed both him and them. For this end, the judges Belknap, Fulthorpe, and their colleagues, were summoned to meet the king at Nottingham; and there certain questions were proposed to them; the answers, which it was determined they should give, being also set before them, ready written, to have their seals and signatures affixed thereto. These questions were, whether the commission appointed by Parliament, did not infringe upon the great rights of the king?—How they ought to be punished, who procured the act appointing that commission; who compelled the king to assent to it; and who asked to see the act for deposing king Edward II.?—Whether Parliament might lawfully proceed, in any business not allowed of by the king?—and whether it might impeach his officers, without leave? The answers, to all these questions, were in favour of the royal authority; and declared all the persons, concerned in procuring the obnoxious act, to be traitors, and liable to be put to death as

* See page 114.

such. Belknap alone ventured to refuse putting his name to these answers ; but the Duke of Ireland giving him to understand it would be at the peril of his life, he had not the courage to persist. Yet he observed aloud, as he signed the paper, that there needed only a gallows and a rope, to give him the end he deserved ; for yielding to what his conscience forbade. Their signatures being thus obtained, the judges were all sworn to keep secret what had past, till the king should call upon them to acknowledge their opinions. But the persons who had insisted on their violating the oath which bound them to decide, in all cases, according to law and justice, could not reasonably expect that another oath would prove more binding. Judge Fulthorpe betrayed the whole the next day, to Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent, the king's half-brother, who immediately informed the Duke of Gloucester. Of this the courtiers were ignorant ; and thinking their first step had succeeded to their wish, they next summoned several sheriffs ; asked what numbers of men they could raise to oppose the nobles who had ill-treated the king ; and bade them take care, that no member should be returned for the next Parliament, except such as the king would fix upon. The sheriffs, however, replied, that the people were too favourable to the lords to be willing to serve against them ; and, that they were wont to choose such members as they liked. Yet Sir Nicholas Bramber undertook, that the citizens of London should stand by the king in any difficulties. Sir Nicholas had been three times mayor ; and it had been his constant aim to form a party in the city, who should act, in all things, at his bidding. And when Richard returned to London, but nine days before the expiring of the Parliamentary commission, he was received with unusual expressions of joy and respect ; both by the Nov. 10. wealthier citizens, and by the crowd who followed him, with shouts, to Westminster.

The next morning he was surprised by the intelligence, that the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Arundel, and Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham; noblemen who filled the respective dignified offices of high constable, admiral, and earl marshal of England, were approaching London, at the head of a considerable army. This news made many faces pale at court. The archbishop of York, indeed, was bold enough to urge the king to prepare for combating the lords; but his advice was thought rash by the other courtiers; and it necessarily fell to the ground, when Bramber^e confessed, that the greater part of the citizens appeared as unwilling as the inhabitants of the country to take up arms in such a cause. Richard was, therefore, again obliged to let Arundel, bishop of Ely, overrule the opinions of his favourite counsellors; and, a communication being opened, in consequence, with the Duke of Gloucester's party, it was agreed that they should pass through London without their troops, and should lay their grievances before the king, who was to receive them in Westminster hall. Thither, he accordingly repaired, at the appointed time; but was kept waiting, on his throne, for near two hours, whilst they refused to pass the mews; having heard that a thousand men had been placed in ambush there, to attack them.

During their delay, the king sent them farther promises of a proper reception; and the sheriffs of London having searched the mews, and its immediate neighbourhood, without finding any armed men, the nobles proceeded to the hall; on entering which, and again on approaching the throne, they made their humble obeisances to their sovereign. The bishop of Ely then spoke, as chancellor; and bade them tell the king, why they had collected such an army. To this they answered, that they had united for the benefit of the king and kingdom; and to *obtain the removal of certain traitors, from*

about his person; especially, the Duke of Ireland, the archbishop of York, the Earl of Suffolk, Chief Justice Tresilian, and the false Londoner, Sir Nicholas Bramber. Having said this, the before-mentioned three great officers of state, with the earls of Derby and Warwick, flung down their gauntlets, or iron gloves, upon the floor of the hall; as a pledge that they five were willing to fight the five persons whom they thus called traitors, and so to prove them such. For the progress of chivalry had brought back the injustice and folly of the Saxon ordeal*, which made might to be the proof of right; every man capable of bearing arms being expected, if he brought an accusation against any one, to offer the accused an opportunity of evading a trial at law, by combating him the accuser. Many charges were so disposed of in this reign; the defendant being allowed, if a priest, or a woman, to fight by deputy; and the earl marshal presiding as judge; that is, taking care that the usual laws of arms were observed in the battle; and punishing the vanquished as a slanderer, if the accuser; or as guilty of the crime where-with he had been charged, if the accused.

In the present instance, however, the king told the lords, that he would summon a Parliament for February, to decide on the justice of their complaints; weakly adding, that they had not terrified him into this concession, as he could have slain them all. He then bade them rise from their knees, and invited them to partake of some refreshment in an adjoining room, where he farther told them, that both parties were to be considered as equally under his especial protection, till Parliament should have met, and pronounced its judgment. But the accused favourites, knowing the determined hostility of the Duke of Gloucester's party, had neither dared to accompany the king on this occasion, nor

* See Vol. i. p. 246—248.

did they put any confidence in his power to protect them. They, therefore, quitted his court in haste, and fled in various directions. The Earl of Suffolk escaped into France. The Archbishop of York sought concealment in Northumberland. The Duke of Ireland got away to the mountains of Wales; whither he was followed by letters from Richard; desiring him to raise an army in Cheshire, and then march for London, on his way towards which, he might expect the king to join him. As Cheshire was notorious for sending forth companies of robbers, so numerous and well armed, that they had, at different times, mastered and pillaged the country, from York to Gloucester, the Duke soon collected about 5000 men, not inexperienced in arms. With this force he was proceeding as directed, having the royal banner unfurled before him, when he reached Radcot bridge in Oxfordshire, on the afternoon of a winter's day; and found the earls of Derby and Nottingham, prepared to oppose his Dec. 20. passing it. A few minutes more, and another force was perceived advancing, under the Duke of Gloucester, from a valley which opened on his rear. Thus surrounded, the Duke of Ireland thought himself too weak either to force a passage, or to face his foes; so, having told the persons about him, that they would, probably, be spared, if he was not in their company, he galloped off the field; and coming alone to an unguarded part of the river, he quitted his horse, flung away his sword, helmet, gauntlets, and cuirasses; and, swimming across the water, concealed himself under the opposite bank during the short remainder of daylight. In the meanwhile, his troops were too much discouraged, by the desertion of their general, to support with any spirit the resistance which their officers attempted to make to the advancing lords; and, when they found their retreat cut off, they submitted to have their horses

and arms taken from them ; after which they were bidden to return peaceably to their homes.

The Duke of Ireland's armour being found the next day on the river's side, he was thought to be drowned ; till news came of his being across the seas ; from whence he never returned ; dying in poverty, and obscurity, at some place in Holland. At this time, the capture of his baggage was near being far more injurious to his royal master, than the dispersion of the army he had levied at his bidding. For the Duke of Gloucester, finding in it the king's letters, read in them such proofs of his eagerness to be revenged on him, for what he had already done, that he was tempted to speak with the earls, and to consult some confidential friends, about deposing king Richard ; but, as he found the two noblemen decidedly against this, they and he marched back to London ; where they dictated to their sovereign the dismissal of his confessor, the bishop of Chichester, and of about a dozen other courtiers, male and female ; and then waited, tranquilly, for the meeting of Parliament.

Feb. 3, 1388. As soon as the session opened, the five lords appellants, so the accusers were called, petitioned the king, that the persons whom they had charged with the guilt of treason, might be summoned before Parliament ; to be there impeached on various counts, connected with the extorting of those iniquitous decisions, signed at Nottingham. And though certain of the judges, serjeants, and other experienced lawyers, being desired to give their opinion before the House of Lords, as to the manner of proceeding, declared with one accord, that the accusations were not brought forward after the manner required, either by the civil, or common law, the peers observed upon this declaration, that the realm of England was not subject to the civil law ; nor was Parliament

to be tied down to the rules of the lower courts. Wherefore they bade the appellants go on with their charges ; and, these being heard and examined, the Duke of Ireland, the archbishop of York, the Earl of Suffolk, Tresilian and Bramber, were all adjudged guilty of treason ; and all, except the archbishop*, condemned to suffer the barbarous sentence of the law against traitors ; though it was only executed on chief justice Tresilian, and Sir Nicholas Bramber, as the Duke and Earl had got abroad. The lawyers who had drawn up the Nottingham questions, and the judges who had signed the answers, were next arrested, in their respective courts, at the suit of the Commons. They pleaded, that the fear of violence had constrained them to obey, what they understood to be the king's will. But the Commons replied, that they ought to have considered it as the king's will, that they should answer the questions put before them according to law ; whereas they had affixed their names to answers, which persons of their calling and experience, must have known to be against the law. Wherefore they also

* The Parliament had put off deciding what their final sentence against him should be ; and thus gave time for a communication with Pope Urban ; who either hit upon, or readily assented to a scheme, whereby he allowed so severe a punishment to fall on the archbishop, as might well content the appellants ; greatly obliged the English chancellor, bishop Arundel ; secured to himself the enormous fees usually paid for his nominations to such preferment ; (see pages 132. 226.) and prevented a lay court from taking upon it to deprive an archbishop of his see. By a bull, dated April 3, he informed king Richard, that he had released archbishop Neville from the duties which bound him to the diocese of York, to make him bishop of St. Andrews, in Scotland ; and, that the archbishopric being thus vacant, he had thought fit to provide it with a most virtuous pastor, in the person of Arundel, bishop of Ely. Urban knew very well, that his pretending to give Neville the bishopric of St. Andrews, would never procure him that see ; as the Scotch acknowledged Clement for their Pope ; so the appellants saw Arundel, who was brother to one of their number, promoted to York ; and Neville, their foe, mocked with a vain title, and reduced to poverty.

were condemned to die, as traitors. At the request of the prelates, however, the sentence against the judges was changed from death to banishment into Ireland; a particular town being marked out for the abode of each, and a small pittance allowed them out of their forfeited estates.

The condemnation of Sir Simon Burley and three other knights, charged with conspiring to thwart the late Parliamentary commission, and to destroy its promoters, was not carried in Parliament without much demurring. The Black Prince had recommended his son to Burley's care; and it is creditable to Richard, that he now humbled himself before his stern uncle, to entreat that the guardian of his infancy might be spared. The Earl of Derby protested against his sentence more angrily. But the Duke was resolved he should die; and would only allow the king to order his being beheaded, instead of suffering like Tresilian and Bramber.

Harsh, however, as the Duke's conduct to his royal nephew was, he did not forget to procure for him a recorded declaration from the peers, that, considering the king's youth, he was to be regarded as wholly guiltless of all that misconduct, for which his evil counsellors were thus punished. The Parliament also freely granted a duty on wool, a tonnage of 7s. 6d. on shipping, a fifteenth, and other taxes, to relieve the debts of the crown, and to provide for the defence of the coasts and sea; though, out of the sums to be thus raised, they made an extraordinary grant of £45,000, to repay the costs and trouble of the lords appellants. The nobles, prelates, and commons, united with more propriety in procuring the king's assent to a bill of indemnity, exempting the appellants from either punishment or prosecution, on account of any illegal acts done by them, whilst endeavouring to bring the late ministers to justice. For this act confirmed the au-

violation of the laws ; by manifesting, that to raise troops, without the king's license, and to threaten to carry on a civil war, were offences which no pretext might screen from punishment, unless the sovereign and legislature should unite to pardon them.

Lastly, as if in testimony that the links which united the monarch and people together, could not be shaken by such proceedings as the past, the king publicly renewed his coronation oath, before the Parliament separated. And the members of both Houses did homage afresh to him, and swore to observe the laws, and to keep the peace of the realm ; adding thereto an oath, that they would never suffer any of the judgments, statutes, or ordinances, made in this Parliament, to be either removed, or repealed.

The appellants and their supporters had been guilty of grievous injustice, in voting that men should die as traitors, for offences which, however strong, did not come under the description of treason ; as laid down by law, in the time of the late king, for the avowed purpose of preventing any man from suffering a punishment to which he could not know that his conduct would subject him *. For some time, the unsparing severity of the late measures had an advantageous effect. But the overruling of the law did not fail to recoil, in the end, on the chief persons concerned in promoting it. The good produced could be no justification of the wrong done. Yet the nation had reason to be thankful, that the courtiers, who possessed the king's ears, were so much kept in awe, by what had befallen the favourites lately condemned, as to be afraid of either undertaking, or tempting him to undertake any measures likely to excite the indignation of Parliament. Hence, though Richard, soon after he came of age, took courage to tell the

* See p. 250.

May 1389. Duke of Gloucester, that as he was no longer a minor, it was fitting he should be allowed to act for himself; and followed up his word, by immediately taking the great seal of England from Arundel, then archbishop of York, and giving it once more to Wykeham, bishop of Winchester; and though he at the same time deprived the Duke, and the Earl of Warwick, of their seats at the council board; still, this change of ministers produced no change in the conduct of affairs. At the end of that very year, Wykeham, and the bishop of St. David's, laid down their respective offices, as chancellor and treasurer, on the opening of Parliament; and would not resume them, till the lords and commons had both declared themselves fully satisfied with their conduct. This public, and unforced, acknowledgment of the right of Parliament, to keep a constant watch over the behaviour of the king's ministers, brought it into good humour; and when he recalled the Duke of Gloucester to a seat, though not to commanding influence in his council, he found the Parliament willing to connive at his also recalling some of the exiled judges, and restoring the earldom of Oxford to the Duke of Ireland's heir.

This domestic tranquillity lasted eight years; and as the unjust and mischievous war with France, which Edward the Third's ambition had entailed upon his country, was put an end to, by truces which now succeeded each other without interruption, those statesmen who directed the councils of the king, or the determinations of Parliament, were at leisure to have devised laws for improving the condition of their fellow-subjects. But the possessors of power, who had been so impatient of the king's claiming undue authority over them, had no desire to save their inferiors from oppression. The selfish end at which they aimed, in the making of laws, was remarkably displayed in a Parliament holden at Cam-

idge; which enacted that labourers should be punishable for asking such wages as they ^{1388.} had lately obtained. By the law then passed, a farming bailiff was limited to the demand of £1 10s. year, with one suit of clothes; the ploughman to sixteen shillings; and the dairy-woman to fourteen, or their year's wages. Nor did this law only forbid labourers from asking more than the sums prescribed. It insisted on their accepting less, if the customary wages in the neighbourhood were less; and it condemned the master to a fine, or imprisonment, if he should offer, or give, higher wages. This same unrighteous law forbade any one, who had come to the age of twelve years in farming service, from seeking to better his circumstances by learning any other business. Under such a law, if a labourer had a large family, his children must underbid their neighbours, to obtain employment as they grew up. There were then no poor's rates. So that the persons who should be thus driven out of work, were under the necessity of either starving, or begging, or removing to a district in which labourers might still be wanted. But here the very same law was again their enemy; forbidding them to beg, and yet also forbidding any labourers to move out of their own hundred, or wapentake, either in search of, or to accept employment elsewhere. And, to ensure their not eluding this oppressive prohibition, it ordered, that every farming labourer should be arrested, whenever found out of his district; unless he had a letter of leave, signed with the seal of his own hundred, and mentioning the cause for which he had been allowed to quit it, with the intended time of his return. Three years later, the Commons petitioned for the king's assent to another law, most disgraceful to its proposers; whereby all illains were to have been forbidden from putting their children to school, lest they should become

clerks *. But he was happily induced to refuse their request.

It was evident that the law passed at Cambridge, could not be enforced without giving the magistrates much trouble. So it was further enacted, at the same time, that justices of the peace should be paid by the receivers of the king's dues; at the rate of half a shepherd's yearly wages for each day of their attendance at the sessions.

The low situation of Cambridge seems to have suggested to this Parliament another law, which deserves notice as the first indication that our ancestors were beginning to suspect, that the grievous sicknesses, which so frequently raged amongst them, were partly the consequences of their very uncleanly habits. This law asserts, that the air of divers cities and boroughs, was infected by the custom which it, therefore, henceforward forbade, of throwing the butchers' refuse and other corruption into the rivers or the moats; which surrounded nearly every town, as part of its defence against the dangers of those insecure times.

The only legislative proceedings, however, at this period, to which the king and Parliament attached importance, were those for making farther efforts to prevent the Pope, and his agents, from issuing orders, and from acting in this country, as if its customs, and the lawful rights of the first personages in the nation, might be trampled upon at their convenience. As one means of checking this, the Pope's collector, a dignified foreign priest, was brought before the council, and there sworn upon the Gospels, to levy no money on the Clergy; and not to attempt to enforce, nor yet to publish any mandates from the Pope, till he should, in each case, have asked and obtained the king's permission. But

* See Vol. i. p. 283.

a person's ignorant belief that his master could protect him from the consequences of his sin, made him indifferent to the observation of his oath; which was soon, and repeatedly, detected in violating. Nor was Urban VI. more scrupulous than his predecessor. For neither the terms of a treaty made by Pope Gregory, his predecessor, and confirmed by himself, nor yet the fear of God, could withhold him from giving the charge of English churches to any applicants whose bribes he thought fit to accept, or in payment for the services of dependents of his own, whom he had no intention of sending to England. This abuse had been long remonstrated against, in vain *; but king Richard's Parliament took more effectual measures. They first enacted, that no one should receive, or farm, the profits of any ecclesiastical preferment, for the benefit of a reign incumbent, without a special licence from the king. A few years after, they passed another law; that any foreigner, having purchased the Pope's nomination to any such preferment, and coming in person to take possession of it on that authority, should be subjected to very heavy penalties. And they now farther enacted, that any persons ^{1392.} whatsoever, purchasing any bulls, sentences of excommunication, or other mandatory letters from the Pope, whereby the latter might intend to put them in possession of any English benefices, should be declared out of the king's protection, and should forfeit all their property. This law treated it as notorious, that though the Pope's nomination to a benefice, was always issued under the name of a *revision*, which word was used as meaning that he had *looked out beforehand* to select a more fit pastor than the lawful patrons were likely to fix upon, it was in reality purchased from him. And, by forbidding the purchase of sentences of excommunica-

* See pages 26. 40. 127. 225. 257. 268.

tion, the Parliament further testified their belief, that the Pope might be bribed to incur the additional guilt of laying the curses of the Church upon any prelates, or magistrates, who should thwart his making a profit by the sale of another man's right.

A bill which was so obviously intended to raise the authority of laymen, at the expence of the great head of the Romish priesthood, would not have passed the House of Lords, when the bishops and mitred abbots were half its members, if the late Papal order, which degraded archbishop Neville under pretence of *providing* for a poor Scotch diocese, had not made the English prelates desirous to see the Pope deprived of the power of treating them in the like manner. Some of the burgesses, in the House of Commons, were also Popish priests, at the time this bill passed. But they were as glad to prevent the Pope's courtiers from getting possession of all the richest benefices in England, as those members who had adopted Wicliffe's opinions were, to join in any measure for stripping the Pope of some of his usurped authority*.

It apparently could matter but little to the cause of godliness, whether the Pope was to be suffered to sell the bishoprics to the highest bidder, or the king to bestow them on court flatterers and meddling politicians. But the time was approaching when, if the Pope had not lost the power of filling up every vacant English benefice with persons of his own choice, he would have made it far more difficult to

* An act of the preceding Parliament had afforded the inferior Clergy a very necessary protection from the rapacity of the monks. For whereas the latter were constantly obtaining permission to appropriate the tithes of parishes to the use of their monastery; it was enacted, that the bishop should henceforth have authority to insist on a fair endowment being set apart for the vicar, (see pages 37, 38;) instead of letting the monks carry off so much, as to leave him no means of being charitable to the poor.

form the Church. And even, at this time, the result was useful; for it enabled the English reformers, or Lollards, as they were now called *, to appeal to undeniable proofs of the corruption of the Romish Church; the king and chief nobility having put their hands to a public letter, in which they reprobated with the Pope, for thrusting such foreigners and natives into possession of the most valuable English benefices, as knew nothing of their flocks, cared nothing for the souls entrusted to their charge, and thirsted only for money.

It is the more remarkable, that these noble personages should have been over-ruled to record this strong testimony against the Romish Church, as they had no partiality for the reformers; whose most active preachers were now arrested by some of the English bishops, and kept in prison for years; if they would not unsay what they had taught the people. "The name of Spencer, Bishop of Norwich, deserves to be remembered with blessings for ever," says a monk, "for he swore, that if one of that perverse sect, the Lollards, did but presume to preach in his diocese, he should be burnt to death, or at least beheaded." Such a punishment could not as yet be inflicted in England by law; but this bishop was not unlikely to have acted up to his breath. Others of the popish clergy strove to keep the people in their old superstitions, by inventing and spreading stories of new miracles, pretended to be wrought in sundry monasteries, for the honour of the saints there worshipped. As they were particularly vexed by Wicliffe's exposure of that strange error in which the Church of Rome still

* The name Lollard was brought from abroad, where it had been applied by the papists before, as an insulting name for persons of devout appearance. It was given to Wicliffe's followers in England, about the time of his death; and was much the same as calling them *canting psalm-singers*. The word *ballad*, is a relic of the old name for a whining sort of chaunt.

persists, asserting, that the sacramental bread is changed into the very body in which Christ suffered*, one of these *lying wonders*† was devised to persuade the bystanders, that this bread could prove itself to be a real human body, by making its weight to be felt. Two priests were carrying the thin consecrated cake, or wafer, in a shrine on their shoulders, round St. Mary's parish, Cambridge, at the feast of the dedication of that church, when, as they passed by an Augustine friary, near the market-place, they declared it had suddenly become so heavy, and was making such efforts to get off their shoulders, that they could scarcely support it. Presently they began to call out for help, and to pant, and the chronicle adds "to perspire; though the weight of the shrine was naturally no more than a boy of seven years old could easily have carried. At their call several laymen ran up, and put forth their hands to help to sustain the shrine. But wonderful to relate," proceeds our author, "they could not feel that it was at all heavy; and when the party had got beyond the friary the priests found the weight suddenly relieved again." If the laymen believed these priests, in opposition to their own senses, they must have been persuaded that the special holiness of the friary made the miracle take effect only under its walls; and that they themselves had not been permitted to be sensible of the weight of the Lord's body, because they were unclean beings compared with the priests.

Like Gallio, King Richard *cared for none of those things*‡. Whilst he pampered his body with whatever might gratify his lusts, he forgot that he had an immortal soul. Questions about religion were of no moment in his eyes, except so far as the revenues of the Church, and the disposal of those

* See Vol. I. p. 255—259.

† 2 Thess. ii. 9.

‡ Acts xviii. 17.

venues, came under debate. But his queen, theincess Anne of Bohemia, became happily anxious know the truth; and in order to find it, she desired to search the Scriptures; procuring different English translations of the Gospels, to compare for his purpose. In his funeral sermon, at her death, archbishop Arundel praised her highly for ^{June, 1394.} this; though he himself was afterwards a persecutor of all whom he could prove to read the Bible in English. But the benefit of the queen's example, though lost upon him and upon her husband, was useful to her attendants; and through them its consequences were blest to all future ages. For a gentleman who had come to England in her train, and had studied at Oxford, carried the writings of Wicliffe back with him into Bohemia, where they were mainly instrumental in raising up those two noble martyrs, John Huss and Jerome of Prague, to bear witness against the errors of popery; and the ray of light which their bold defence of the truth shed upon Germany, became, in its turn, one of the means of opening the eyes of Luther; by whose exertions the forgotten scriptural doctrine of justification by Faith *, was once more proclaimed throughout all continental Europe.

The vices of Richard had contributed to save his queen from finding such satisfaction in worldly greatness, as might have prevented her from taking any real interest in the hopes of heaven; and, notwithstanding her amiable disposition had not secured his delicacy during her life, it made her death so painful to him, that, not knowing where to look for true comfort, he sought relief in active occupations, and took the command of an armament, which the Duke of Gloucester was otherwise to have conducted, into Ireland.

It was in the month of October, 1394, that the

* Acts xiii. 39. and Rom. iii. 28,

king and duke landed at Waterford, with 4000 men-at-arms, and 30,000 archers. Such a force the Irish had no hope of being able to resist. The chieftains of Leinster and Ulster, therefore, in all seventy-five petty despots, who had made themselves important by harassing and robbing their weak neighbours, and combining with the strong to resist the authority of the government, now came forward to tender their submission; with promises of being, henceforth, faithful subjects to King Richard. Four native Irish princes, O'Neal, styled king of Meath, O'Brian king of Thomond, Mac Murchad king of Leinster, and O'Connor king of Connaught, followed the example of these lesser chieftains; and attended the English monarch to Dublin; where they were put under the care of Sir Henry Crystall. This gentleman, many years before, had accompanied the Earl of Ormond in an attack on the wild Irish; and was in eager pursuit of the flying enemy, when a stout Irishman, whom he was passing, sprung up on his horse behind him, and urging the animal forward, whilst he held Crystall's arms, prevented his dismounting till they were out of sight of the earl's party, and surrounded by the friends of the native. Being thus a prisoner, Crystall was not ill-used by his captor, Brian Costeret, a man of consequence among his own people, who gave him his daughter in marriage, but detained him seven years in captivity. At the end of that time, however, Brian was, in his turn, taken prisoner by the forces of the Duke of Clarence; and his horse attracting the attention of some of the Earl of Ormond's people, they remembered it as once belonging to their lost comrade Crystall. By them Brian was strictly questioned; and when they found that Crystall was still alive, they bargained for his being allowed to come away, with his wife and children, as the only condition on which the Irishman might himself hope to be set free. The exchange was effected; and

r, the knowledge of the Irish language which stall had acquired, during his detention among m, occasioned his being employed to prepare se Irish kings for going, with propriety, through ceremonies usual when the English sovereign conferred the honour of knighthood. His task was t a very easy one. For they said, each of them d been knighted when he was seven years old; so at they were as much knights already as they uld be. And, as to learning the manners expected at the English court, they felt it a grievance dine apart from their grooms, to use saddles and rrupps, and to wear breeches, instead of the fillings.

But whilst King Richard, and those about him, are intent on making the submission of these half-vage kings contribute to the splendour of a show, stead of devising how they might be obliged to e. peaceably and orderly, for the future, he was called home by a deputation from the English elates, who had crossed the seas to inform him, e Lollards were become so bold, that they had laid fore parliament a formal remonstrance against rious errors and unscriptural usages of the Romish urch.

It was taken for granted, that men liable to be rprisoned at the will of the prelates, for calling ese errors and abuses by their just names, would ot have ventured upon presenting this remon- rance, if they had not been encouraged to do so y some persons of their party in parliament. When e true Church is under persecution, it is usually en that *not many wise men after the flesh, not any mighty, not many noble are called into it**; e the fear of losing their reputation, wealth, or nk, makes it then especially difficult for those who ve either honour, or riches, to *enter into the king-*

* 1 Cor. i. 26.

dom of heaven *. Yet there were a few men of rank who had profited by Wicliffe's teaching. Sir Richard Stury, Sir Lewis Clifford, Sir Thomas Lattimer, and Sir John Montacute, brother to the Earl of Salisbury, were spoken of to the king as notorious Lollards; and, as soon as he got back to England, they were summoned before him, and so fiercely threatened, that Stury took a solemn oath he was no friend to Wicliffe's opinions; and Clifford was tempted to give up his faith, that he might avoid the anger of a fellow-creature †.

A royal order was also sent to Oxford, requiring the Chancellor of that University to expel every disciple of Wicliffe; whilst Archbishop Courtney visited the dioceses of his jurisdiction, to enforce the arrest of those he chose to call heretical preachers; and in the northern counties, Archbishop Arundel, again chancellor, succeeded in so terrifying an unhappy man, named Dynet, that he consented to swear, and set his name, to articles, which convicted the archbishop of idolatry, for requiring him so to do. By the very first of these articles, Dynet was made to say, and swear, "From this day forward I shall worship images, with praying, and offering unto them, in the worship of the saints that they be made after." It is not to be supposed that Arundel, or the clergy in his chancery, who drew up this oath,

* Matt. xix. 23.

† The horror and bitter remorse with which Sir Lewis Clifford regarded his recantation, nine years later, when the fear of death was before him, made him express himself with such deep self-
abhorrence in his will, as to afford good reason for hoping that God had forgiven him, and filled his heart with the spirit of true repentance. "I Lewis Clifford, false and traitor to my Lord God, and to all the blessed company of heaven, and unworthy to be called a Christian man, make and ordain my testament.—At the beginning I, most unworthy and traitorous to God, recommend my wretched and sinful soul wholly to the grace and to the mercy of the blessed Trinity; and my wretched carcase to be buried in the furthest corner of the church-yard in which parish my wretched soul departeth from my body."

new nothing of the second commandment. But, being unacquainted with our Lord's manner of explaining the will of his Father, they had not observed, that He was wont to make the spirit of the command go farther than the letter *. They thought, and the Romish church has continued to teach so, that the plain letter of a command may be broken without being liable to its penalties. Whereas St. Paul has shewn, that he considered the second commandment as no less comprehensive than our Lord taught men to think of the others, declaring that even *the covetous man is an idolater* †.

Richard now thought fit to marry again. His extravagant habits had made him so needy, that his chief object in selecting his future wife was the dowry to be bargained for; and Charles VI. of France, being notoriously willing to tax his subjects without mercy, for the aggrandisement of his family, the King of England offered to become his son-in-law, though the eldest daughter of Charles was but a child of eight years old. The offer was very acceptable to the French king; and the two monarchs met near Calais, where the little princess Oct. 1396. was given up to Richard, to be placed under the care of his aunts till she should be of a marriageable age. The truce between France and England was not changed for a treaty of peace, even on this occasion; but it was agreed that the renewal of war should now be put off for twenty-five years more, and that King Charles should pay £312,000 for the satisfaction of seeing his daughter become Queen of England. Her dowry, however, was not to be entirely paid for some years; and, in the mean while, King Richard had indulged his vanity in making such costly presents to the French court, and had spent so much in feasts and shows at the coronation of this child, that a member of the house

* See *Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33—37.*

† *Eph. v. 5.*

Feb. 1397. of Commons, named Haxey, moved for petitioning the king to pass a bill, which should restrain the expenses of his household, and prevent so many bishops and ladies from living in the court at his cost. The motion was assented to by the Commons, but when the king heard of it, he desired the Lords to let them know, that he considered such interference with his domestic arrangements as a direct attack upon his royal privileges; and that he insisted on having the name of the mover given up to him by Bushey, the Speaker of the House. This péremptory language so alarmed the Commons, that in order to regain the king's favour, they actually condemned Haxey to die as a traitor, for proposing what the majority of them had then assented to. And the man would probably have perished by this unjust sentence, had he not happened to be a clergyman, which brought Arundel, now Archbishop of Canterbury, and the rest of the prelates, into parliament, to request his life of the king.

Richard had been successful, not long before, in another trial of what his people would submit to; having taken advantage of some riotous proceedings in London, to revenge himself on the citizens, under that pretext, for refusing him a loan of £2000. On this occasion he had deprived them of their corporate privileges; had set a governor over them; and removed the King's Bench and Chancery to York; till they were fain to pay him a fine of £20,000, though not condemned by any court of law; and to treat him with a display scarcely inferior to that of a coronation, on his re-entering London. When, therefore, he found his parliament so ready to gratify his anger against one of its members, as even to go the length of voting an innocent man's death, it seemed to the king, that now no one durst resist his power. At the very same time the Duke of Gloucester, one of those unwise politicians,

ho think that a sovereign's first duty is to extend a kingdom, by force or fraud, was constantly irritating the king by rude remarks upon what was, in truth, far more beneficial to England than any other part of Richard's administrations,—his avoiding a war with France; and his suffering the Duke of Bretagne to purchase back the possession of Brest. And, on the other hand, when the king turned for advice from this morose uncle to his favourite relations, his half-brothers, the Hollands, and the Earl of Rutland, son to the Duke of York, they were all, unhappily, bad and treacherous men; John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon, especially, was a person whom he had himself once determined to give up to the sentence of the law, for a murder, combined with exceeding cruelty. Thus goaded by affronts, which fell on a haughty temper; conscious that they who should have controuled any abuse of his power, were ready to serve his angry passions, and tempted to indulge them, by the suggestions of flatterers, under the guise of affectionate kinsmen, King Richard was evidently given up to rush headlong into wickedness, by that God who had *filled him with plenteousness*, and so long forbore to punish, without winning his thankful love; and against whose faithful servants the king had employed that authority with which their master had entrusted him.

Having found a willing tool in Mowbray, the Earl Marshal, who, when consulted, exasperated the king still farther against his uncle of Gloucester, Richard and he, with the Earl of Huntingdon, mounted their horses, “at six of the clock in the afternoon, the just hour when they used to go July, 1397. to supper,” says an old chronicler, and riding through London with a picked company of archers, proceeded so far that night towards the duke's castle of Pleshy, near Chelmsford, that the Earl of Huntingdon being bidden the next morning to precede the party, and announce a visit from the king, en-

tered the court-yard before the duke and duchess were up. In a few minutes more, the sounds of the king's trumpets were heard, and the duke, throwing a mantle over his undress, hastened down to say, his royal nephew was welcome; yet asking, why they had not given him time to make a better preparation. To which the king replied with a courteous air, that he must request him to go in again, and dress for a ride speedily; as they had no time to spare, and he wished for his company and advice on some business of state. Before the duke could be ready, Richard had begun a kind and playful conversation with the duchess; and she beheld her husband ride forth almost unattended by his own people, without any suspicion that she was to see his face no more.

For a while Richard acted the frank kinsman and the gracious sovereign, as they rode together; but suddenly the earl marshal came upon them, with his armed men. The king spurred forward, and Mowbray seized the duke's arm, and said, "I arrest you in the king's name." In his surprise, the duke called after his nephew, but Richard rode on, as if he heard nothing; whilst the two earls forced the Duke of Gloucester to accompany them to the Thames, and then to go on board a sloop, that they might convey him to Calais, of which the Earl Marshal was governor. About a month after this, Judge Rickhill was awakened at midnight, at his house in Kent, by a messenger, who brought him an order for repairing forthwith to Calais. There he was told by the earl, that the Duke of Gloucester, universally supposed in England to have been already murdered, was in his custody; and that he must question the duke respecting his conduct, when chief of the lords appellants, and take down his answers, that they might provide the king with an excuse for what was to follow. Having thus got from him all he chose to tell, Mowbray, Earl Marshal, who was

the duke's gaoler, brought into his presence his and Serle; the former a domestic of the household, the latter a confidential servant in of the Duke of York's son. These men were n by sight to the Duke of Gloucester, and, as is unconscious of having given his nephew, the of Rutland, any cause for rancour, the sight of cheered him; and saying, "Now I know I do well," he asked the man, how he did. But shortly told him, they were come, by the king's, to be his murderers; and that the Earl Mar- had men at hand to assist them; but that he t see a priest, and confess his sins, before they n their work. The priest came; his confession said; and then the duke, resigning himself into hands, as one who knew resistance was vain, red them to lay him on a bed; where suffocated him under the cloaths. Sept. 5.

the mean while the miserable Richard had succ- ed in arresting the Earls of Arundel and War- by treachery; the latter, after rising from a er, to which the king had invited him, as one n he delighted to honour. He had also found ey, Green, and Bagot, three members of the mons, willing to lead the lower house in coming y resolutions he might wish; and the Earl of and, the Hollands, and Mowbray, ready to copy worst part of the conduct of the former lords llants. They took that very name, in their ; and appealed to parliament, that justice might lone against the Duke of Gloucester, and the arrested earls, for their treason; in forcing the to those measures which had received his un- g assent nine years ago. On their appeal, the of Arundel was brought to the bar of the e; and the king, though conscious not only of he had himself ordered to be done, but of what en believed, respecting his late uncle, ed his warrant to the lieutenant-go- Sept. 21.

vernor of Calais, for bringing the Duke of Gloucester to stand his trial. To this warrant the answer returned was, that he could not be brought up, having died whilst under the Earl Marshal's custody. Yet did this Parliament adjudge him to be a traitor; and his property to be forfeited, under that sentence, to the crown; instead of calling for an inquiry into the circumstances of his death. When the Earl of Arundel was put upon his defence, he naturally pleaded the act of indemnity, which had passed with the king's consent; and which particularly exempted him from any prosecution, for the conduct now charged against him as treason. This, however, he was told, had been repealed at the request of Sir John Bushey, in the name of the Commons. He then stated, that he had received a later charter of pardon, as an especial favour from the king, which was signed with his sovereign's own hand. But that too was said to be revoked; and, it being his last plea, the sentence against a traitor was passed upon him, though the peculiarly horrible parts of that sentence were remitted by Richard, who was yet so bent on enjoying the sorrows of those who had once humbled him, that he chose to witness the earl's execution. Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent, who had married Arundel's grand-daughter, and Mowbray, Earl Marshal, who had married his daughter, were also both present; and the latter is said to have offered to help bind his father-in-law's eyes, which produced from the sufferer but this remark, "That it would have been, at least, more decent had they two kept away from such a spectacle."

The womanish tears of the Earl of Warwick saved him from being put to death under a like sentence; by convincing the king that he was never likely to have courage again to resist his sovereign's will. So he, and two or three others, were only banished the realm. Among these was Archbishop Arundel, whom the Commons next impeached for the aid he had

given his brother, the earl, by his influence at court ; in those transactions to which the king looked back with such excessive indignation. The archbishop had been a most unfaithful servant to his Heavenly King ; doing all he could to make the commandments of GOD give way to the traditions of men. But he does not appear to have been a dishonest servant to his earthly sovereign, in matters of state ; still less had he been wanting in fidelity to the pope. Yet, because Richard chose to punish him along with his brother, the earl, the pope consented to degrade him, like his predecessor at York, by commanding him to resign the archbishopric of Canterbury, that the little bishopric of St. Andrew's might be *provided* with a fit pastor in his person. At the same time, the whole body of the English priesthood had shut themselves out, unawares, from any right to interfere in favour of their primate ; by consenting, at the opening of this Parliament, to an unusual request from the Commons ; that they would give some lay gentleman authority to agree, in their name, to any measures resolved upon by the House, in the expected trials for treason.

The great lords who had encouraged and served the king's evil passions, now received from him such *wages of sin* * as he could bestow. The estates of the condemned were shared amongst them ; and the earl of Rutland, the two Hollands, and Mowbray, were respectively made Dukes of Albemarle, Exeter, Surrey, and Norfolk ; whilst the Earl of Derby was raised to the dukedom of Hereford, that his father, John of Gaunt, might not be irritated by the profusion with which ducal titles were now bestowed. Throughout these proceedings a majority in Parliament had shared, or connived at their sovereign's crimes ; and none of them seem to have much affected the populace, at the time, except the execu-

* See Rom. vi. 23.

tion of the Earl of Arundel, who had been a successful naval commander, and had gained the especial good-will of the Commons, by reducing wine to £1 10s. the ton, through his bringing 19,000 tons at once into the English ports, the spoils of a Flemish fleet, which he had refused to let the merchants of Flanders purchase back from him, though they offered £12 the ton. His calm bravery on the scaffold had increased the general respect for him; and the people went the absurd length of regarding him as a martyr, and of going on pilgrimages to his grave, that he might plead for them with God. The king was as unenlightened as they; and being farther conscious of the guilt of having procured the earl to be unjustly condemned to death, he grew so alarmed as to make him dream he saw Arundel standing before him, and threatening him with a day of retribution; and then he became afraid of lying down to sleep, lest this vision, as he thought it, should appear again; so, at ten o'clock of the night, he sent several noblemen to see the corpse dug up; and bring him word, whether the earl's head had really united itself to his body again, as the crowd believed and reported. Finding this was not the case, his terror rather passed away; as though the vengeance of the living God were less to be feared than that of a dead man. Yet, so far was he from being able to live a more easy life, in consequence of his having thus violently got rid of those who had thwarted him, that he imagined it necessary for his personal safety to be constantly surrounded by a guard of two hundred Cheshire banditti, with their bows always kept strung; men whose attachment he sought to secure by styling himself Prince of Cheshire, and by conniving at their riotous violence about his court.

In the mean while the Duke of Norfolk, who had helped Richard to destroy his former friends, began to suspect that the king could not bear the sight of

my concerned with the first lords appellants, and would cut him off, in the end, with the like treachery to that which he had lately witnessed and shared. To save himself from this danger, he so far changed sides again, as to betray his suspicion of the king's hidden purposes to the Duke of Hereford, that the knowledge of their common danger might dispose the latter to join in taking measures for their common security. But the Duke of Hereford had seen enough of Norfolk's character to make him doubt whether this confidence was sincere, or intended as a snare for his life. He, therefore, rose in his place in Parliament, and told the house, that having met with the Duke of Norfolk, they had ridden together between Brentford and London, and the Duke had said to him, "We were near being destroyed for the business of Radcot Bridge. This is such a marvellous and false world, that if it had not been for some persons, your father of Lancaster and yourself would have been taken, and dead, when you came to Windsor; and the Duke of Surrey was sworn to destroy myself, and three other lords with you." "To which," said Hereford, "I replied, God forbid that the king should agree to this; for he swore to us, with a cheerful countenance, that he would be our very good lord. But Norfolk answered me, So he has sworn to me many times, on the sacrament, but I cannot trust him the better for that. If the king cannot accomplish his purpose now, he will watch us, to slay us in our houses ten years hence. Now these words," said the Duke of Hereford, turning to Richard, "sound so highly to the king's dishonour, that I here charge Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, with being a false and disloyal traitor." By repeating this conversation thus publicly, and giving in a written copy of his charge, the Duke of Hereford made it almost impossible for King Richard to persist in carrying on any plot against the life of him

and his father, if he had intended it ; and he threw back the danger on the Duke of Norfolk, if the language used by that nobleman had been meant to tempt him to some treason, to have been betrayed afterwards to the king. This bold step reduced the Duke of Norfolk to the miserable expedient of asserting that the account was untrue. " Right dear lord," said he, addressing the king in his turn, " with your favour I make answer unto your cousin here ; and say, that Henry of Lancaster, Duke of Hereford, like a false and disloyal traitor as he is, doth lie in that he hath said, or shall say, if it be ought otherwise than good of me."

Their assertions being thus directly opposed to each other, the opinions of the age left them no reputable way of obtaining a decision, as to the side on which the truth rested, but by a combat between the appellant and defendant. A day was fixed, therefore, for their fighting in the king's presence. Till that arrived, the Duke of Norfolk was confined to Windsor Castle, and carefully watched; that he might speak to no one without the king's knowledge. Whereas the Dukes of Surrey and Exeter, by joining the aged Lancaster in giving bail for his son, sought to convince him and the public, that the king was a well-wisher of the Duke of Hereford. But when the day came, and the parties met in the Court of Windsor Castle, prepared for the fight, the heralds called the two Dukes before the king ; who advised them to make peace together. For Richard feared that the Duke of Norfolk, if vanquished, might confess what would so much incense the nobles as to produce a rebellion. In excuse for not accepting this apparently friendly advice, the Duke of Hereford added farther charges against his antagonist ; telling the king, " by his false suggestions, he hath caused to die, and to be murdered, your right dear uncle, the Duke of Gloucester." At hearing this, the king

became agitated and angry; and asked the Duke of Hereford if he meant to stand to such words. Presently he again besought them to be friends, and disagree no more; thus manifesting, in the face of the assembled nobles and people, his unwillingness to search into the circumstances of his uncle's death, now so publicly declared to have been by murder. After a brief pause, Sir John Bushey declared to the parties, in the king's name, that their battle must be adjourned for some weeks, and should then take place at Coventry.

Still the Duke of Hereford was not to be bent from his purpose; and he had reduced his antagonist to the impossibility of relinquishing his challenge, without confessing himself a murderer. In September, therefore, the nobility crowded to Coventry; and the dukes again met, sumptuously furnished for an encounter, to be regulated by the High Constable of England. Each had entered the lists, and they had taken their seats in chairs of state, at the opposite extremities. At length a herald had bidden them mount their horses, in the king's name, and address themselves to the battle; and, at the sound of a trumpet, the Duke of Hereford had already set his charger forward some paces, when the king yielding again to his misgivings, lest the Duke of Norfolk should be forced to a full confession of the guilt they had shared, cast his staff into the ring. At this signal, the heralds made both the dukes stop their course; and they were again led back to their chairs, in which they continued two long hours, whilst the king and his counsellors had withdrawn to decide what should be done. At the end of that time, Sir John Bushey came forward, and read the king's sentence, "That the appellant and defendant, should both quit the kingdom within fifteen days; the Duke of Hereford not to return within ten years, under pain of death; and the Duke of Norfolk, for having sown sedition

by his words, to be a banished man for life, and his estates given up to the king, until certain sums, said to have been misapplied by him, as Governor of Calais, should be fully repaid."

The laws of the land gave the king no right to inflict banishment thus. But the last subservient Parliament had authorized a committee, composed of the king's favourite counsellors, to continue to sit, and decide on any petitions, not determined before the close of the session; and as most parliamentary proceedings were begun upon petitions, the committee had assumed authority to do all that Parliament might have done; thus entirely overthrowing the Constitution, or ordinary method of governing the country. The two dukes, therefore, aware that a new Parliament might possibly vote a still severer sentence, if the king should desire it, prepared to obey, without remonstrance; and when the Duke of Hereford waited on the king to take leave, his submission was so acceptable to Richard, that he remitted, on the spot, four years of the term of his banishment. And now the king had indeed got rid of all who offended him at Radcot Bridge; by means which the Duke of Norfolk had little foreseen. But the charge so publicly made against the latter, at Windsor, had turned the suspicions of the people, respecting the Duke of Gloucester's death, into a conviction that Richard was guilty of his murder; and it had made the bold accuser so popular, that the progress of the Duke of Hereford towards the coast, was cheered by the language of affection and respect from crowds, who assembled on the roads to greet him as he passed, and expressed their sorrow that he should quit England as a banished man.

Yet this seems to have had no other effect on King Richard, than to make him think, that if he could drive so popular and powerful a subject from his native country at a word, he need fear no resist-

from any quarter, let his conduct be what it
ld ; especially when the death of John
haunt left him no other uncle living but

Feb. 3,
1899.

Duke of York, an indolent, and weak-
led prince. He therefore acted, henceforward,
one who knew not the fear of God, and was
ed above all fear of man. He sent the Duke of
eford an order to consider himself as banished
life ; and in violation of the promise given him,
his absence should be no bar to his entering
possession of the great inheritance of the Duchy
Lancaster, the king's officers seized upon the
ole. The Earl of Northumberland, and his po-
ar son Hotspur, were next banished the king-
a ; for declining to attend upon Richard, when
y knew it was his design to seize their persons.
t it was little in the king's eyes to injure, and
nate, the greatest nobles of the land. He con-
ed to turn all the men of property in seventeen
nties into enemies, at once ; by sending notice
he respective sheriffs, that those counties were
his mercy, for having traitorously afforded men
supplies to the lords appellants, eleven years
ore ; for which he should invade them as an ene-
s country. This threat gave such alarm, that
clergy, gentry, and freeholders of those coun-
were glad to purchase from him charters of par-
t, at such prices as he chose to require. He next
manded the sheriffs, throughout all England,
nake his subjects swear, and put their seals to co-
ants, promising that they would acquiesce in all
t the last Parliament, and the unconstitutional
mittee, had enacted ; and he also bade them
rison, till farther orders, any known to speak ill
him, either in public or private. After which he
t to various lords spiritual and temporal, and to
erent monasteries and other corporations, bid-
g them lend him such sums as were specified in
letter to each.

Having excited so much indignation by all these measures, that the fear of a powerful force at hand could scarcely have prevented the people from breaking out into rebellion, Richard quitted England; leaving it to be governed by the inactive Duke of York, and taking out of the country as many knights and soldiers as would follow him, to attempt again the conquest of Ireland.

By the time he had reached Bristol, the whole kingdom was in a state of fermentation; but still he embarked; though the duke of Albemarle, with a fleet of a hundred sail, was not yet ready. May 31. for service. His folly amazed his subjects. When the country people met in the markets, they said, "This wicked king Richard of Bourdeaux will spoil every thing. He minds only foolish diversions, talking with women, and wasting the wealth of the nation. He has killed Gloucester and Arundel, and banished Henry of Lancaster, and the bold Percys; and there will soon be never a brave man left."

In London the chief citizens held consultations with some discontented knights and prelates, who made their wishes known to Bishop Arundel, now in Exile at Cologne; and he, travelling from thence to Paris in the disguise of a friar, urged the Duke of Hereford, now properly of Lancaster, to return directly to England. At first the duke made no answer to his representations; but, leaning on a window which looked into the gardens, he admitted the thought of sin; and a short pause was enough to make the temptation of the crown of England outweigh all scruples about the crimes which must be committed to procure it; so turning to Arundel, he said, "I will consult my friends." They were not the men to discourage ambition. And what he had resolved upon would, evidently, be easiest executed whilst king Richard was absent from England. The duke, therefore, departed from Paris in haste, as if

on a visit to the duke of Bretagne; and setting sail from Vannes, with only three small vessels, in which were Bishop Arundel and but fifteen knights with their servants, he landed at Spurn, on the Yorkshire coast. There he was soon joined July 4. by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, and to them he declared, upon his oath, that he had no further object than the recovery of his lawful inheritance, the estates and titles of his deceased father, John of Gaunt. The injustice of his being deprived of that great property, without trial, made his declaration as popular as it was plausible; so that when it became known to the holders of estates under the crown, whom the Duke of York had summoned to meet him in arms at St. Albans, they refused to combat against a claimant for redress, whose rights could not be set aside without weakening the security of their own. On the other hand, the numbers who resorted to the Duke of Lancaster increased so fast, as he moved across the country, that he was soon at the head of 60,000 men. With this army he sought the Duke of York, who had retired to the west; and having received permission to confer with him in the chapel of Berkley Castle, he persuaded his uncle to join, instead of opposing him. They in consequence besieged Bristol together; where Bushey, Green, and Bagot, had shut themselves up; and the town being soon captured, the soldiers were permitted to hang up two of these mischievous flatterers, without any form of trial.

In the meanwhile, Richard was endeavouring to subdue Mac Murchad, king of Leinster; who had defied his power, but fled to the woods and bogs, into which the English army could not venture to follow him. For six weeks a continued westerly wind, doing the will of *Him* whom *the winds and sea obey**, and who was now raising up one sinner to

* Matt. viii. 27.

punish the unthankfulness of another, prevented the passage of any vessels from the English to the Irish shore ; so that the king knew nothing of the duke of Lancaster's arrival in England, till he heard of his being every where received with open arms, and that Arundel, again styling himself Archbishop of Canterbury, assured the people he had a bull from the Pope ; promising forgiveness of sins to all who should rise in arms to aid the duke.

As a pledge for the father's good behaviour, Richard had carried with him to Ireland the duke's eldest son, Henry Plantagenet, afterwards the victorious Henry V. He now put that young nobleman, and the son of the late duke of Gloucester, under custody in Trim Castle ; and sending the earl of Salisbury across the sea, to rouse North Wales and Cheshire in his favour, he himself sailed with the dukes of Albemarle, Exeter, and Surrey, for Milford Haven, accompanied by as large a part of his army as the shipping in Waterford could convey. With this force he proposed to rescue Bristol ; but when he arose on the second morning after his landing, he observed, from his window, that the greater part of his troops had moved off in the dark. The following night the king deserted the rest, in the disguise of a priest. In his flight, he was attended only by his half-brothers, Surrey and Exeter, with the bishop of Carlisle, and one or two more. It was their hope to find the earl of Salisbury at the head of a larger and more trust-worthy force : and the earl had been joined by several thousand men ; but, after remaining a few days uncertain whither the king was gone, they had left him with no more than 100 men under his command, by the time Richard arrived at Conway. Finding himself thus powerless, the king sent the dukes of Surrey and
Aug. 9. Exeter (for Albemarle had deserted him in the hour of distress) to meet the duke of Lancaster, now advanced to Chester, and to ask what were his

lesires. The duke received them courteously, but told them they must not return ; and that his answer should be delivered to the king, by one who knew his intentions. The person meant was the Earl of Northumberland ; who suffered the duke to make use of him for the disgraceful purpose of deceiving Richard, lest he should put to sea and escape to France ; where he would have found his father-in-law, the French king, ready to supply him with money and troops, for the recovery of his throne. The earl accordingly left Chester for Conway, at the head of 400 spearmen and 1000 archers. But when he came to where the road passes under the mountains, near the shore, he made these men station themselves in the defiles to his left, and bade them wait there till they should see him repassing. He then proceeded with a few attendants, and being admitted into Richard's presence in Conway Castle, he desired the king to confide in all he should say, as he would assuredly use no deceit, and then told him, that his noble cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke *, Duke of Lancaster, only wished to see him reign with equity, and call a parliament ; before which his brothers, and the Earl of Salisbury and Bishop of Carlisle, must be brought to account ; and that if he would appoint Henry justiciary of England †, he should be as much the king and lord of his people as ever ; and his cousin would fall upon his knees before him, and sue to be pardoned for the past : wherefore he entreated him to join the duke forthwith, and accept these reasonable terms.

Having listened so far, the king desired the earl to withdraw, whilst he consulted his friends. With them was a French gentleman, who happened to be in attendance on him ; and this person, seeing no crime in such falsehood, relates how Richard said to

* He was so surnamed from the place of his birth.

† See Vol. I. p. 479.

this confidential party, "My lords, we will pledge ourselves to comply; for, by the Virgin Mary, I see no other way, since all is lost. But I swear to you, that the duke shall die a bitter and certain death; whatever I may promise him. I will send persons among the Welsh, who shall secretly draw together enough of them to overpower him."

The moderation of the demands made upon him, through the earl, had evidently induced the king to believe, that Henry would be found less powerful than reports spoke him. Hence Richard's hope of still getting the upper hand; if he could throw the duke off his guard, by appearing to acquiesce cheerfully in all that was required of him. At the suggestion of the Bishop of Carlisle, however, he desired the Earl of Northumberland to confirm his words by an oath; taken upon the sacramental bread. As they both believed this bread to be the very body of Christ, the offence of swearing upon it to the truth of a string of falsehoods, should seem awfully daring; but the earl knew that the Archbishop of Canterbury was on his side; so, being confident of obtaining absolution from him, he manifested no reluctance to perjuring himself before God.

Having witnessed this, Richard declared his readiness to accompany the earl; with professions of contentment as deceitful as the language which had been used to himself. And they sallied together from the castle, each devising treachery against the companion whom he was courteously addressing; and each doomed, by the just Disposer of events, to see his own treachery bring about his own destruction. When they could look back upon the defile, in which Northumberland had placed his ambuscade, Richard perceived that he was in his enemy's power, and exclaimed, "God of Paradise assist me. Why did we believe this earl on his plighted faith?" It was in vain that the earl

ought to keep him still deceived ; kneeling before him, and assuring him that the troops he saw, had only been placed there to protect the party from the violence of casual marauders. " If so," replied the king, " I want no such attendance. Let me return to Conway." This the earl refused ; and then the king burst into bitter exclamations, and vain prayers to the Virgin Mary for help. At times he called down curses on Northumberland ; apparently without a thought of the wickedness of his own treacherous intentions ; as if their proving unsuccessful took away that criminality, which he so clearly perceived in the earl's deceitful conduct. At length they reached Flint Castle, where the Archbishop of Canterbury met him, and fell at his feet, yet joined the earl in persuading him to confess, that he was unfit to govern. The next morning the king rose early and got upon the roof of a tower, to watch the approach of his antagonist. He had to this moment flattered himself that his past misconduct was but a light matter ; and had, therefore, refused to believe that the nation desired his downfall ; thinking it was only the ambition of the House of Lancaster which had stirred up its own dependents, to a bold attack upon his lawful authority. But when the advance of the duke's army became visible, approaching from Chester, the king's heart sickened, as he perceived troop after troop coming into view, till the host before his eyes amounted to more thousands than had followed him in his Scotch campaign ; whilst its numerous banners seemed to tell him, that all the gentlemen of England had united to display their abhorrence of an uncle's murderer.

By noon this army had encompassed the castle ; and the Duke of Lancaster was at the gates, conferring with the Earl of Northumberland. It was agreed between them, that he should not enter till the king *had dined*, and Richard was summoned to

that mid-day repast; at which the Earl of Salisbury and Bishop of Carlisle, with two knights, would have attended on him, with the respect they had usually shown their sovereign. But he told them, they were now companions in danger; and bade them sit down, and share with him what was provided. This cheerless meal ended, Richard went down into the court of the castle, to receive his future master. The duke bent lowly on seeing the king; and again, whilst advancing, bareheaded, to meet him. As he approached, the king too, uncovered his head; and greeted him with, "Fair cousin of Lancaster, you are right welcome." "My lord," answered the duke, again bowing nearly to the ground, "I am come back sooner than you ordered me. I will tell you why. Your people complain, that for twenty years, you have ruled them ill. But, if it please God, I will help you to govern better." "Fair cousin," replied the king again, "since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth me well."

This ready use of fair speeches to hide deep hatred, is among the marks by which the Holy Spirit describes the wicked:—*The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart**. And as Richard was now the weaker, it was his lot to experience that *the kisses of an enemy are deceitful*†. Scarcely were these civil words ended, when the duke bade, bring the king's horses. On which two sorry jades were led into the court; that there might be as little as possible, in the king's appearance, to give his handsome person dignity in the sight of the expecting multitudes. Being thus mounted, Richard and the Earl of Salisbury followed the duke through the gates, as his captives; and were insulted by shouts of exultation, which accompanied them to Chester.

There the king was made to issue writs to assem-

* Ps. lv. 21.

† Prov. xxvii. 6.

at a parliament; and then Henry committed him to the keeping of the sons of Aug. 19.
 the late Duke of Gloucester and Earl of Arundel,
 who were charged to bring him to London. At
 Northfield he attempted to escape; and got down
 to a garden from the window of a tower. By which
 he did but provide his keepers with a pretext for
 having armed men constantly in his chamber.

Near London, the mayor and city companies came
 out in state, to show their respect for Henry; and
 he was hailed by the whole populace with cries of
Long live the good Duke of Lancaster; as he passed
 through Cheapside, to make his offerings in St.
 Paul's, and kneel by his father's tomb. The duke
 could now no longer conceal his ambitious projects.
 To Richard, who asked, "Am I your prisoner, or
 your king, that I am thus guarded?" he had replied,
 "You are my king, sir, though the council of your
 realm has thought proper to place a guard about
 you." But on Michaelmas day, Scroop, Archbishop
 of York, with the Earls of Northumberland and
 Westmoreland, and others, knights and lawyers,
 waited on the king, in the Tower of London, and
 told him, they were informed, that before quitting
 Wales, he had confessed to the Archbishop of Can-
 terbury and the Earl of Northumberland, his inabi-
 lity to govern the nation, and his willingness, for that
 reason, to resign the crown. He replied, it was
 even so; and, having desired to see the duke, he
 read aloud a document which had been put into his
 hands; yielding up his royal authority, and releasing
 his subjects from their allegiance. He then said,
 that if he might be permitted to choose his successor,
 it should be his cousin of Lancaster; and, taking
 off the signet ring from his finger, he put it on the
 duke's hand. This he did to induce the duke to
 be, as he a few days after requested, "a good lord
 to him;" for, otherwise, he knew that though he
 might properly resign his own rights, he could not

But when the members met, they proclaimed their assembly *the States of the Realm*, since there was no king. Yet, to confirm what had taken place, they first received evidence of Richard's resignation, and then drew up certain charges against him on grounds justifying their deposing him from office, which they ordered a committee to read, in their name, in the presence of Richard, being thus, by his own act, and also by the act of the commons, no longer king of England, his reign was ended.

It had not been brought to this conclusion without much sin on the part of those who deposed him; for many of them had risen in arms against the king, in direct violation of oaths, which they had taken after being fully acquainted with his faults; whereas the Word of God declares it to be the part of a good man, if he hath sworn to his neighbour, not to depart therefrom, though it be to his own hurt *. It is also said, that *who resisteth the powers that be, resisteth the ordinance of God* †. If the nation be tyrannized over by a king, *the Lord executeth judgment for all the oppressed* ‡; *He removeth kings, and*

at diversity of opinions, there would be always some who would think it a time to rebel, and the nation could know but little peace. It is difficult to propose the case in which any people could justly complain that this divine law had forced them to submit to injustice and cruelty. Even if they suffered long and painfully under a tyrannical sovereign, their own misfortune, and not the divine law, may undeniably be seen to be the cause of their suffering. For when a tyrant issued his order, whom could it injure, if his subjects did not neglect the advice of our Lord, where he saith, *Fear not them which kill the body, but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* *? The Duke of Gloucester and the Earl of Arundel might have continued to live in peace and honour, withstanding King Richard's desire to be regeared on them, if there had not been a Mowbray ready to murder in the dark, and to betray his father, the dukedom of Norfolk; and majorities in Parliament ready to help forward the king's iniquitous designs, and to vote the death of those he hated, rather than encounter his displeasure, or miss the rewards he was willing to bestow on such as served and obeyed his sinful desires.

Foolishly and ill, however, as the king and many of his subjects had conducted themselves, his aversion to war was a gift from heaven bestowed upon the nation, though undesired. This disposition had been very favourable to the temporal prosperity of the kingdom. The recently encouraged woollen manufacture had, in consequence, extended into the north and west of England; and, altogether, the nation had increased more in numbers and in wealth during this reign, than it had done in the same length of time under far more popular monarchs; though the ill-drained state of the country, and the in-

* Mat. x. 28.

attention of all ranks to domestic and personal cleanliness, had occasioned the plague to break out twice ; and a law, forbidding English merchants to export goods in any but English ships, must have been somewhat injurious to the growth of commerce.

END OF BOOK IV.

**ENGLAND GOVERNED BY DIFFERENT PLANTAGENET
KINGS, WITH DISPUTED TITLES TO THE CROWN.**

Henry IV. surnamed of Bolingbroke.

As soon as the persons commissioned to read to Richard the sentence of his deposition had returned to the hall in which *the States of the Realm* were assembled, the Duke of Lancaster rose in his place, and crossing himself on the forehead and breast, with much shew of religion, laid claim to the vacant throne, in these words, "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancashire, challenge ~~this~~ *the* reune of Yngland, and the corone,

with all the membres and the appurtenances, als I that am disendit be right lyne of the blode coming fro the gude Lorde Kyng Henry Therde; and thorghe that ryght that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of my kyn and of my frendes to recover it: the whiche rewme was in poynt to be undone for defaut of governance, and undoying of the gode lawes."

Had Henry felt that respect which he affected, for the holy name so solemnly invoked, he would not have used it to introduce a claim founded on what he knew to be false. For, in speaking of his descent from Henry III., he alluded to a report circulated by his partisans, that Edmond, King of Sicily*, by marrying the heiress of whose family John of Gaunt obtained the Lancastrian property, was the eldest son of Henry III., but past off as a younger brother, for being misshapen. Had this been true, it would have given the duke a claim to the crown, as his mother's representative, before any of the family of Edward III. Such a claim he wanted, as an excuse for neglecting the just rights of the young Earl Mortimer; and, therefore, he thus artfully assumed its existence, to deceive those who wished to be so deceived, and the many who knew next to nothing of their national history; whilst he took care not to state its grounds in that explicit manner which must have led to a formal enquiry respecting their truth.

For the present, all he said was favourably heard; and Arundel, acting again as Archbishop of Canterbury, and turning to the peers and people, asked what they thought of the duke's challenge. To this question he was answered from all around, "We will have him to reign over us." Upon hearing which, Scroop, Archbishop of York, joined the primate, and taking Henry between them, they led

* See Vol. II. pp. 23. and 115.

him to the throne; before which he knelt for a minute, as in prayer, and then, seating himself, was hailed *King of England*, with Sep. 30th,
1399. a general shout.

Thus had Henry obtained the prize he coveted. But it brought him no happiness. Before he became the servant of the sin of ambition, he had been frank, popular, and cheerful. Now he was a deceiver; suspicious and suspected; conscious of his, and therefore gloomy.

Being at once heir to the very extensive possessions of John of Gaunt, and in right of his wife, to the ample estates of the Bohuns, earls of Hereford; and having reduced Richard to his own terms, and brought his evil advisers and abettors to the punishment they deserved; so that both the king and his courtiers would have felt, that they could neither violate the constitution nor the rules of natural justice, without the certainty of a bitter humiliation, Henry might have passed his life as a powerful subject; always able to protect his friends, and to intimidate his enemies. But becoming a king, with the consciousness that many of his subjects regarded him as the usurper of another's inalienable right, he was often obliged to bend to the will of others, as the price of their support; yielding to the commons, when they chose to impose new restraints upon the royal authority; and selling his soul to the priesthood; that those influential bodies might bear with patience his occasionally proceeding, against noxious individuals, with extreme severity; and might regard the continuance of his reign as the best security for the preservation of their own privileges.

The new sovereign's first measure was to issue writs for the election of a new parliament, to meet in six days; which time being obviously insufficient for the purpose, the members elected under the writs signed at Chester, in king Richard's name,

were permitted to resume their seats; as the persons last chosen by their respective constituents.

Oct. 13. The coronation soon followed; and, to turn the superstition of the spectators to the king's advantage, archbishop Arundel pretended that a golden phial, with the oil which he poured from it on Henry's head, had been given to Thomas Becket by the Virgin Mary herself, though unused till now; and that she had prophesied, that such English kings as should be anointed from this phial would prove kind to the people, and champions of the church.

In the mean while the parliament was already proceeding to correct some of the abuses of the late reign, and to punish the perpetrators; yet with such moderation as displeased many angry spirits. Thus it enacted, that prosecutions for treason should not be conducted any more by a combination of appellants in parliament; nor the name of treason extended beyond the bounds set to it, by the judicious statute of Edward III.*. The dukes of Albemarle, Surrey and Exeter were then reduced again to earls; being deprived of those estates and titles, which they had received from Richard for aiding him to destroy Gloucester and Arundel. The duke of Norfolk had died, in banishment, at Venice; but a servant of his was tried and executed, for the share he had taken, at his master's bidding, in the murder of the duke of Gloucester. Such were the measures pursued towards some of Richard's agents. The case of the late king himself had been early submitted to parliament, by Henry's desire; and the lords had given it as their advice, that he should be kept in close custody, and in as private a manner as could be devised. An useful law was also past, for diminishing the overpowering influence of a few nobles. For, whereas these great lords were accus-

* See page 230.

tomed to give their liveries to a number of knights and gentlemen; who were thus known to each other, and to the public, as pledged to support the same patron, whether in right or wrong; it was enacted, that no person, save the king himself, should henceforward give his livery to any but his menial servants.

Henry IV. had scarcely reigned three months before the fruits of his deliberate perjury * began to be visible, in the destruction of his peace by a long succession of secret conspiracies against his person, and of open rebellions; whilst the just anger of the Almighty was still more awfully displayed, in the greatness of the crimes which he was given up to commit, under the harassing temptation of unbearable anxiety.

The first conspirators were the late degraded dukes; who would have surprised Henry in Windsor Castle, unprepared for defence; but that the earl of Rutland, treacherous alike to all who thought him a friend, had hastily purchased his own pardon by sending the king notice of their approach. They seized the castle, and proclaimed Richard once more king of England. But the country was against them; and they heard that Henry was already marching back upon them with the Londoners; so they speedily dispersed, and fled. The earls of Kent and Salisbury were taken, and beheaded without trial, by the mayor and citizens of Cirencester. Whilst the earl of Huntingdon, falling into the hands of the men of Essex, was carried to Pleshy; that they might put him to death on the spot which had witnessed his entrapping the duke of Gloucester. Several other gentlemen were put to death by Henry's orders, with all the barbarity attending the execution of traitors; for continuing to think themselves bound to take up arms in the

Jan.
1400.

* See page 377.

cause of that sovereign, whom he and they had alike sworn to support with their lives against every enemy. It was pretended by the partizans of the new government, that when Richard heard, in Pomfret castle, of the execution of his two half-brothers, the Hollands, he refused all sustenance; and so starved himself to death. But if he perished of hunger, no one now doubts it must have been because food was withheld from him. The account of his death most generally believed, states him to have been murdered, after a desperate resistance, by sir Pyers Exton, and a party of assassins, sent down to Pomfret, and admitted into his prison, for that purpose. His corpse was conveyed to London, with his face uncovered; that the spectators recognizing it, might not afterwards be tempted to rebellion, by any hope of having him for their king again. And though Henry IV. might secretly shudder, he went through the popish form of making offerings, and uttering prayers to God and the saints, for Richard's soul, before all the people, in a stately funeral ceremony performed at St. Paul's church.

By this time the French king, Charles VI., had begun to arm under the pretext of defending his son-in-law's rights. But he was prevailed upon to renew the truce, on condition of having his daughter sent back to him, as soon as he had ascertained that the inhabitants of Guienne, still subject to England, chose to acknowledge Henry IV. rather than throw themselves into the arms of France, with the prospect of being oppressed by such heavy taxes as they saw the French government impose upon their neighbours. Still this threat of an invasion from France had produced the effect of encouraging the Scotch to try whether they might not gain something by attacking England, whilst its sovereign was obliged to watch his southern coasts. But Henry heard of their preparations; and, obtaining a supply both of men and money from a great council of nobles and

prelates, who taxed themselves for the purpose, he was enabled to march without a battle, as far as Edinburgh, and lay siege to its castle; ^{Aug. 1400.} whilst the duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, retired before him towards the highlands. It is to Henry's credit, that he had the wisdom to perceive how impolitic was the ferocious system of warfare pursued by his predecessors, the Edwards. By taking care that the unresisting inhabitants should have but little occasion to dread the presence of his army, he induced them to remain at home, instead of running off to swell the number, and increase the rage of his opponents. But though this expedition into Scotland effectually prevented any invasion of the English counties for the present, from that quarter, the king was obliged to return homewards without having compelled the Scotch government to sue for peace; in consequence of a formidable insurrection which had broken out in Wales, where Owen Glendour, a descendant of Llewellyn, one of its last native princes *, had summoned his countrymen to arms for the recovery of their ancient government. This Welsh gentleman had been sent to London in his youth, to study law in the inns of court; and had been admitted among the shield bearers of Richard II., on whose dethronement he returned to his native province. There he was soon engaged in a dispute with Lord Grey de Ruthyn, about some land; which he charged the latter with having unjustly wrested from his family. Had the parliament listened to Glendour's petition for redress, he would have been without a plausible excuse for appealing to the sword. But his petition, though supported by the bishop of St. Asaph, was contemptuously rejected; and, from that hour, his fiery temper had made him pant for revenge. As soon, therefore, as Henry had carried his army out of England, Owen

* See p. 72—75.

Glendour began to make war upon lord Grey. And when the king sent orders into the midland counties for raising men to put down these disturbances, Glendour boldly declared himself Prince of Wales; and invited every true Welshman to join his standard. On Henry's approach with the royal army Glendour's troops dispersed themselves amongst the mountains, and were sought for in vain. This happening more than once, joined with the circumstance of the king's tent being unexpectedly blown over by a sudden midnight storm, frightened the English soldiers into a belief, that their enemy had received power from Satan to defend himself by witchcraft.

Perhaps the troubled conscience of the king of England, like that of Herod *, made him think that the spirits of those whom he had lately put to death, were combined with *the prince of the power of the air* †, to do him despite. Certain it is, that after the manner of many poor ignorant sinners, who have thought to turn aside the wrath of God, by exerting themselves to force others to obey His law with great exactness, rather than sacrifice the lusts of their own hearts to its holy precepts, Henry now began to abet the Romish priesthood in a fiercer persecution, of such as they called heretics, 1401. than had ever hitherto been permitted in this country. For this end he allowed a petition of the priests and prelates to be introduced amongst the acts of parliament; and gave it the authority of an act by his royal assent ‡. The object of the petition being nothing less than that the Romish bishops should have power to deliver to the sheriff any person whom they might convict of holding opinions contrary to the doctrines of the Romish church; and that the sheriff should be bound to "cause the person, so delivered over, to be openly burned to death

* See Mark vi. 14—16.

† Eph. ii. 2.

‡ See pp. 229. 395.

the sight of all the people." There was much of *the wisdom of the serpent* in devising this act; for, whereas the older laws of the church forbade ecclesiastics even to be present at the passing of sentence of death upon any offenders, this law enabled them to secure the infliction of the punishment of death upon their opponents, in its most frightful form, without pronouncing any sentence of harsher sound than this, "Let the heretic be given up to the civil magistrate, to be dealt with as he shall think fit."

This law was not intended merely to alarm the reformers. There was a victim already in view, when it received the king's assent. William Sautre, the parish priest of St. Osyth's, in London, had formerly been rector of St. Margaret's, Lynn, and had been dragged before Bishop Spencer, in 1399, for saying "That he would not worship the cross on which Christ suffered, but only Christ that suffered upon the cross;" and for asserting that the bread used in the holy communion of the Lord's Supper, continued still to be bread after the priest had blessed it. The fierce bishop so terrified Sautre, that he was driven to declare himself mistaken in the presence of his parishioners; and to take an oath, that he would never again preach as he had done, in the diocese of Norwich. *It were better for this unhappy bishop that a mill-stone had been hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should have put a stumbling-block in the way of one of Christ's little ones**. But the same Saviour who looked with pity on the apostate Peter, had mercy on Sautre; and wrought within him so effectually, that *out of weakness he was made strong through faith*†. Being anxious, therefore, that his defence of the truth should be more public than his sad denial of it, he boldly requested to be heard in

* Luke xvii. 2.

† Heb. xi. 33, 34.

parliament "for the commodity of the whole realm." This, however, the prelates had the address to prevent; desiring the house, that a question of religion might rather be referred to *the convocation*; that is, to an assembly composed of the bishops and other dignitaries of the church, with the proctors of the parochial priests. Before this body Sautre was accordingly ordered to appear; not to teach, but to take his trial, as guilty of maintaining still those offensive opinions, which he had renounced before the Bishop of Norwich. When these heads of the church were so ignorant of the word and will of God, as to put a Christian minister twice upon his trial, for saying that he would not worship the piece of wood which had put their Redeemer to pain, we cannot wonder that Sautre's knowledge of Scripture was of little use in defending himself before them. By the favour of the true Head of the church, he was now enabled to adhere firmly to the truth, notwithstanding the wearisomeness of a protracted examination, and the severer punishment known to await him. Archbishop Arundel *, therefore, declared him a twice-fallen and incorrigible heretic; and fixed an early day for his being publicly degraded from holy orders. The ceremony took place at St. Paul's, and was meant to be imposing. The archbishop was seated on his throne, and attended by several of his suffragan bishops, dressed in the ostentatious robes of the Romish church. Before them appeared Sautre, whom they had caused to be likewise apparelled in the full vestments of his rank; and his process having been read aloud, archbishop Arundel pronounced him degraded from the dignity of a priest; in token of which the paten and sacramental cup were taken

* The pope had now sanctioned Arundel's resumption of the archbishoprick; confessing that he had been deceived, when he consented to his removal; and getting rid of Walden, who had been made primate in Arundel's stead, by pretending to appoint him bishop of Samoa.

from him, and he was stripped of his priest's cassock. The same insulting form was repeated, and a similar sentence pronounced afresh, as he was deprived of the office of deacon, and of four inferior orders in the Romish church, in regular succession, till two door-keys were placed in his hand and a clerk's surplice on his back, as though he were a parish sexton; and then the archbishop bade an attendant take these also from him, and caused his head to be shaven after a different form from that superstitiously used by the clergy *. Lastly, a layman's cap was put upon him, and Arundel declaring him deprived of all the privileges of a clergyman, and given up to the custody of a lay court, was not ashamed to add, "which we beseech favourably to receive the said William Sautre;" though he was conscious that his own powerful influence had just carried the law which put it out of the power of the lay courts to do otherwise than, as the king's writ for his execution expressed it, "to put him into the ^{Feb. 26.} fire, there, in the same fire, really to be burned."

Having killed the body they could do no more. But there is a spirit in heaven which, might it communicate with the inhabitants of the earth, would exult to tell how, after having been so ensnared by the fear of man, that he was nigh becoming one of those who *loving their life lose it*; he yet found such grace in the eyes of his Lord, as to be admitted into "the noble army of martyrs," who, having *hated their life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal* †.

The king having thus joined the prelates in fabricating the first law which condemned Englishmen to death for differing from the ruling church, and having shared with them the exceeding guilt of condemning Sautre to the flames, he and the priesthood fell alike under the fearful sentence of woe denounced by our Lord against such as would *shut*

* See Vol. I. p. 108.

† John xii. 25.

up the kingdom of heaven against men : neither going in themselves, nor suffering them that are entering to go in *. On understandings thus unblessed, the restored light of the Gospel shone in vain. A long conversation between archbishop Arundel and William Thorpe, whom he kept a prisoner in the archiepiscopal residence at Saltwood, was committed to writing by that reformer in the solitude of his dungeon, and brought to light long after the good man's death, or execution. And it shows that the truth was boldly and convincingly set before that prelate and the priests around him ; but that *He in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, had blinded the eyes of their persecutors, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted* †. Others of the clergy became thorns in the side of the king, harassing him with plots and insurrections. Whilst he in his turn afflicted them, by punishing their treason without any regard for the privileges and exemptions, which many a Romish priest had suffered great hardships, and cast away his soul to secure. Before many months had passed, a priest taken up at Ware, the prior of Lanercost, a canon of Dunstable, and nine Franciscan friars, all suffered the cruel death allotted to traitors, for tempting the people to rebellion, and spreading reports that Richard was still alive.

In the course of the same time, great numbers of Welshmen had quitted their situations in England as labourers in the English towns, or as scholars at Oxford and Cambridge, to rally round Glendower and had so increased his strength, that he defeated and took prisoners, lord Grey de Ruthyn and sir Edmund Mortimer. The cruelties which the Welsh committed, as he advanced in the western counties of England, filled the people

June 22,
1402.

* Matt. xxiii. 13.

† Ps. cxvi. 13.

‡ John xii. 40.

h horror and indignation; yet, when king Henry
in person to their relief, he was not seconded
his subjects with sufficient spirit to be able to
do any thing considerable. In the north, the
Percies were more successful against an invading
army from Scotland, led by earl Douglas. The Eng-
lish archers gained the day, in a battle fought at the
battle of Homildun hill; and Murdach Stuartson
the regent, the earls of Douglas and Murray, Sept. 14.
the barons Montgomery, Erskine, and Graham,
eighty other lords and knights, were obliged to
surrender themselves to Hotspur. Murdach and
many of the knights were carried up to London by the
duke of Northumberland, and presented, as his
messengers, to the king; who bade the young Stuart
be comforted, as he had fought like a true knight;
reproached another of the party with having de-
ceived him by fair words. He then told them to
rise from their knees, and invited them all to dine at
table. But, though courteous in his manner to-
wards them, the king thought it politic not to allow
many of the chief nobility of Scotland to return
home, and endeavour to recover their character for
himself, by distinguishing themselves in another
campaign against him. He therefore commanded
the Percies to refuse any offers for the ransom of
their captives; and he, at the same time, forbade
Hotspur to attempt redeeming his wife's brother,
Edmund Mortimer, from his captivity in Wales.
His last order seemed peculiarly hard; because
Grey's relations had been permitted to treat
Glendour for his redemption. And it moved
Hotspur's indignation to perceive, that the circum-
stance of sir Edmund's being uncle to the infant
Mortimer, had tempted the king to wish the
decease of a brave man, the natural protector of that
king's neglected rights. In brief, all Henry's fine-
policy was made to redound to his own hurt.
Scotch nobles and sir Edmund Mortimer, think-

ing themselves personally injured by the king, made alliances with their captors; and the fiery temper of lord Percy, which had procured him the surname of Hotspur, determined him to measure his strength against the monarch whom he had mainly helped to place upon his throne. Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, joined his nephew at the persuasion of Scroop, archbishop of York; who now repented the part he had taken against king Richard, the benefactor of his family. Earl Douglas summoned his friends from Scotland, to aid a cause, on the success of which his liberty was to depend; and Mortimer, having married Glendour's daughter, was authorised to promise the assistance of 12,000 Welshmen. Whilst all endeavoured to win the favour of the lovers of justice, by proclaiming that it was their purpose to punish Henry for his deceit and perjury, in swearing that his only aim was the recovery of his paternal inheritance*; and to place on the head of earl Mortimer, the lawful heir†, that crown which Henry had usurped. Such a combination made it necessary for the king to put forth all his strength. But so lukewarm were his subjects, that he could only muster 14,000 men, with whom to march into the west, and prevent the junction of Hotspur and the Welsh. The army of the Percies was about as strong; and when they met near Shrewsbury, Henry would gladly have avoided risking his kingdom on the result of an engagement. He, therefore, commissioned the abbot of Shrewsbury to visit the camp of the insurgents, and to offer such terms as might reasonably satisfy the discontented lords. But the earl of Worcester advised his nephew to put no trust in the offers of the king; so that an engagement be-

July 21,
1403. came unavoidable. In the battle which ensued, Hotspur and Douglas forced their way into the centre of the royal army, bent on either seizing

* See page 377.

† See page 339.

· killing the person of the king; and slew the earl Stafford and sir Walter Blount, who, by his device, had put on suits of armour ornamented like that which Henry wore. If this device saved their sovereign's life, it intimidated his soldiers, who thought they had seen their king cut down; whilst his son, the Prince of Wales, had been wounded in the face, and the royal standard beaten to the ground. The king's army was, therefore, more than half defeated, when an arrow, piercing Hotspur in the brain, left his followers without any leader in whom they could confide; so that they began to disperse in every direction. Earl Douglas was now again taken prisoner, but was treated as a legitimate foe. Whereas the earl of Worcester, and some other English gentlemen, were beheaded the day after the battle.

In the mean while the earl of Northumberland had been detained at home by sickness; and, when he would have followed his son, his progress was checked by the earl of Westmoreland and Robert Waterton, at the head of such partizans of the king as could be collected in the north; so that the survivors of the battle of Shrewsbury found him still in Markworth Castle. From thence he repaired to the court at York, on a summons from Henry, and was fain to sue for pardon from those who had so recently slain his brother and his son; and to protest that the latter had acted in disobedience to his express commands. He was told in reply, that he must remain near the king, and plead his cause before the next parliament. For though the king put no confidence in his protestations of past, or future fidelity, he was unwilling to drive the friends of so powerful a family to despair; at a moment when the want of money made it very difficult for him to keep his army any longer together.

As certain French nobles had attacked the Isle of Wight, and the western coasts, from a personal

quarrel with Henry, it appeared so evidently necessary to give the king the means of providing for the protection of the kingdom on every side from the French, Scotch, and Welsh, that the Commons were led to grant a larger supply than the ordinary ways of taxing the people could produce. The method they hit upon, for raising this unusual amount, seemed to themselves so unsupportable, that they only consented to it upon condition of its never being repeated. The better to secure this, they farther stipulated, that all commissions and records, connected with the raising of this money, should be burnt as soon as the tax was paid into the exchequer; that future governments might not be provided with a mischievous precedent. It is more remarkable that they should have so effectually succeeded in their generous wish not to injure future generations, that, at this day, no one knows what could have been the nature of the tax, which appeared to our forefathers so particularly odious. That the importance of the grant was strongly felt by the king, appears from the extreme deference he paid to this parliament; which not only protected the earl of Northumberland against his anger but appointed a commission to regulate the royal household; and even insisted on Henry's dismissing certain favourite domestics, attendant on his person and on that of his queen. Whilst they desired that their own servants should be held exempt from arrests, for debt or damages, during their master's attendance on parliament. Before many months had elapsed, however, the king was again so embarrassed for money, that the secret favourers of religious reform, in the commons, persuaded their colleagues to join them in suggesting that, instead of further burdening the nation, he should seize the estates of the church to supply his wants; as the clergy, they said, possessed a third of the whole kingdom; and would become less luxurious &

entive to their duties, if their incomes were ably diminished. This proposal, having ce started, was too pleasing, even to the aity, to be readily dropped. Five years e Commons presented a memorial to the ting forth that, out of the estates wasted in ng the pride of the bishops, abbots, and ie might maintain 15 earls, 1500 knights, quires, ready to defend the country, besides ed additional alms-houses.

event the king from assenting to strike such archbishop Arundel had remarked, in the ance, that the more land the church held, er for the king ; as the clergy had been in t of granting the crown a tenth, more fre- than the laity would vote it a fifteenth of operty. Besides which, said he, we offer and prayers, day and night for the king, ll employed in his service. The speaker of mons, however, replied aloud to this, " That d little for the prayers of the church ;" be- er a scoffer, who believed none of the pro-

God, or else one who saw that what Arun- d *the church* was not an assembly of those t the promise of receiving what they ask is For they *keep God's commandments, and do ings that are pleasing in His sight* *. On the speaker's words, the archbishop took er language of defiance. And as the Com- d also requested the king to revoke all the f crown estates, bestowed during the reigns wo predecessors, they had thereby made it est of a large and powerful portion of the to make common cause with the prelates ; declare, that they would never consent to church of its temporalities. In this decla- e king joined ; content to draw this advan-

* 1 John iii. 22.

tage from the debate, that the spirit shown, by their opponents made the priesthood feel they needed his favour. This gave him courage to inflict as severe a blow upon the privileges of the prelates, in the very next year, as the Commons had aimed at their riches; and, from that time forward, as long as the church of Rome prevailed in England, it never perplexed the government again by any bold opposition to the authority of the sovereign.

It was at the instigation of Mowbray, earl Marshal, son of the king's former antagonist, and in the hope of receiving powerful aid from the discontented earl of Northumberland, that Scroop, archbishop of York, raised the standard of rebellion anew; and

became the first example of an archbishop's May, 1405. being brought to the scaffold. Throughout his extensive diocese, proclamations were affixed to the doors of churches and monasteries, charging Henry with the murder of Richard his king; declaring that he had no right to the throne; and calling upon the people to rise in arms, and punish him for these, and sundry other offences against the state and church. By this means an army was collected around the archbishop, when the earl of Westmoreland appeared, at the head of an inferior force, and desired to know what he meant by thus marching through a peaceable country. In reply, the archbishop sent him a list of grievances, for which, he said, the people sought redress. These the earl affected to agree in thinking worthy of redress; and requested that they might have a personal conference, to examine them together. They accordingly met between the two armies; and the earl, having a tent pitched on the spot, persuaded the incautious prelate that they should show themselves at its entrance drinking together, to let his followers see they were on good terms. Whilst he managed that a person should go, at the same time, amongst the archbishop's ret

liers; and tell them, that, as no opposition to him intended, they might return to their own homes. then amused Scroop, and Mowbray, who had accompanied him, with a protracted discussion on demands, till he could venture to tell them his troop must advance; and that, as resistance would be hopeless, they had better consent to release his prisoners. At Pomfret the earl of Westland presented his captives to the king, who hastily marched into the north; and who, issued a commission to the obsequious judge Fulpe, had both of them beheaded, without regard to the superstitious reverence with which an archbishop's privileges were then generally respected, or to the right which their peerage gave to each, of being tried by the peers.

June
8.

As the king advanced the earl of Northumberland into Scotland. There he continued more than two years; and then, weary of wandering about an unwelcome guest, he made one effort more to draw the English into rebellion against Henry; but being joined by few, except his own tenantry, he was defeated and slain on Bramham Moor; after which he suffered every calamity to which Richard's vengeance could have condemned him; and all inflicted by the hand, to which his own had given the power to destroy him.

Feb. 28,
1408.

It might have been expected that the pope, as the avowed guardian of the privileges of the clergy, would have laid the king and kingdom under an interdict, to punish the execution of an archbishop. While pope Innocent VII. threatened an excommunication, and then withdrew it, Gregory XII. succeeded him in 1406, instead of attempting to correct the king, was fain to receive from Henry a public letter of reprimand for his notorious conduct; in continuing that struggle with the rival pope, which he had been especially and most solemnly sworn to put an end to, by his own resignation;

and which, Henry told him, was generally to have already occasioned the violent death of 200,000 Christians. To the people of England this continuance of the strife between the rival of the Popish church was an unmixed blessing; though whilst the pope was comparatively in the powerful influence of archbishop Arundel, steadily directed to terrify the Lollards in denial of their faith; still the archbishop could move an exterminating army against them, like popes in the days of their power. Many, it fell away, under the terror of his threats; and were bribed to desert the truth, by the prospect of promotion in the Romish church. Yet the licitness of the trial, necessary before he could condemn any to be burned to death, gave different individuals an opportunity of openly exposing the weakness of the arguments urged in defence of the Romish errors; and of displaying such a noble resolution to undergo any sufferings, rather than be guilty of falsehood, as could not but win the admiration of many, in an age very much disposed to regard truth as the first of virtues. An unprejudiced historian must have felt that no boasted hero ever more undeniable instance of true courage furnished to record, than was exhibited in the conduct of a humble artificer, John Badby; when, having been tried and declared guilty of heresy by the bishop of Worcester, he was brought in before the archbishop's court to be terrified into recantation or condemned. The pompous retinue of Arundel and the imposing company of attendant bishops and nobles, might have been expected to strike the poor blacksmith dumb with awe, whilst all the nobles knew themselves to be but despised slaves in the eyes of their lordly superiors. And Badby was farther well aware, that he stood before one ready to have him put to a frightful death, if he did not utter what his conscience bade him. But he

which is the evidence of things not seen*, he knew and believed, that a greater than Arundel there, though invisible; even that *Lord of lords, King of kings* †, who said, *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God* ‡; and who misused the especial help of the Holy Spirit to his agents, in the hour when they should be brought before *magistrates and powers* §.

Their main charge against him was, that he said "that after the sacramental words spoken by the priests, to make the body of Christ, the eucharistical bread doth remain upon the altar as in the beginning; neither is it turned into the very body of Christ." Nor did this brave soldier of Christ shrink from the certain consequence of maintaining sound doctrine in the face of its blind gairners; but boldly and justly replied, "That when Christ sat at supper, with his disciples, he had not a body in his hand to distribute among them. For the consecration there remaineth the same as before; yet, notwithstanding, it is a sign and sacrament of the living God. If every host consecrated at the altar were the Lord's body, there would there be 20,000 gods in England; but we believe in one God, Almighty; and in the unity of the Trinity." In the last sentence of this answer he delivered his testimony against the latest and greatest error of the Romish church; which now rests upon its followers believing, not only that it seems to their eyes and taste a piece of bread, but the actual flesh ||, at the moment the priest pronounced certain words; but, that every portion of it became the whole body of Christ. Most unhappy for them, however, the prejudices of Badby's times were too strong to let them receive instruc-

* Heb. xi. 1. † Rev. xvii. 14. ‡ Luke xii. 8.
 § Luke xii. 11, 12. || See vol. i. pages 255, 256.

tion from his plain exposure of their folly. When, therefore, he had told them, "that he would adhere, and stand to, the replies he had already made," Arundel confirmed the bishop of Worcester's sentence; and ordered Badby to be delivered over to the civil power. The archbishop added, as in Sautre's case, that it was his earnest entreaty, the temporal lords present would take care the convict's life might be spared. How grievously insincere this language was, may be understood from the circumstance, that the king's writ for burning him was issued that same day.

The execution took place in Smithfield. There Badby was fastened to a stake, by an iron chain, when the prior of St. Bartholomew's came out with a procession, bearing the wafer, or thin cake used by the Romanists in administering the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and would have persuaded him to acknowledge, that it was the body of Christ. But he was enabled to bear up against this temptation; and replied with the same firmness as before the archbishop, that he knew well it was hallowed bread; and not, as they profanely called it, God's body. As soon as he had said this, a barrel, open at both ends, was let down over his head; and, dry wood being heaped around it, fire was set to the pile. His conquest over that fear of pain which has such power over the natural man, was yet, however, to be made still more conspicuous. Henry, prince of Wales, was amongst the lookers on; and hearing Badby's prayers for mercy, amidst the flames, he could not think that the sufferer was crying out for aught but relief from his present pain. So he bade the officers quench the fire, instantly; and remove the burning barrel from around his body. This done, he told Badby, that if he would give up his heresy, and believe what the church required, he should not only live, but should be provided for, all the remainder of his days, from the

treasury. But the faith of this holy martyr held him still. He saw the opening gates of heaven too near, to be tempted to step back; so, by refusing the prince's offers, he suffered them to replace the barrel and light the flames anew; and willing to *endure the cross for the joy that was before him* *. And thus was *death swallowed up in victory*.

There was a fellow-feeling for the brave, which led the prince to make, what he meant as a liberal offer for the benefit of a misguided fanatic. He was very incapable of estimating the true greatness of character into which *the mighty working* of the Holy Spirit had *transformed* a humble peasant, and *renewing of his mind* †. Badby might have looked down with pity on the emptiness and short-sighted folly of those pursuits of, what is called, secular ambition; which the world regards as most important and politic. For his aim was eternal life; *to sit with the Lord in His throne, even as He, who has also overcome, sat down with the Father* ‡. He was as the prince, though he had displayed bravery in battle, and had been successfully entrusted to the king when but sixteen years of age, with the command of a force opposed to Owen Glendowr, yet looked down upon with pity by the ambitious; as a person whom they might not unreasonably despise, for taking pleasure in being the leader of lawless associates, and in being wondered at by the honest. The dissolute behaviour of this, his eldest son, was one of those chastisements which gave the peculiar pain. Yet an incident which brought forward the better feelings of both, proves that the king did not disregard justice in putting his adversaries to death, nor the prince make himself a party with the vicious, without sinning against the good law which a merciful God had written in

* Heb. xii. 2.

† Rom. xii. 2.

‡ Rev. iii. 21.

their hearts. One of the prince's ill companions being on his trial for felony, before chief justice Gascoigne, he had the indecency to enter the court, and insist that the culprit should be set at liberty. But Gascoigne was an upright judge, who had before run the risk of angering the king rather than obey his illegal order, that he should sit in judgment on archbishop Scroope. And he now as resolutely refused to comply with the prince's improper demand; and rebuked him for having made it. Enraged at this, the prince drew his sword, as though he would have struck the judge on his seat. The firmness of Gascoigne, however, was not to be shaken. "Sir," said he, "remember yourself. I am here in the place of your sovereign lord and father; to whom you owe double obedience, as a subject and a son. In his name I charge you to desist from your wilfulness; and, for the disrespect you have already shown, I commit you to the prison of the King's Bench, there to remain till his pleasure be declared." The calm dignity of the chief justice's behaviour made the prince reflect; and, changing his manner instantly, he put up his sword, and walked submissively to prison. But his followers were less capable of profiting by Gascoigne's lesson; so they hastened to have the king informed what an affront had been passed upon his son. Henry was too clear-sighted to view the conduct of either party in so false a light. He lifted up his hands to heaven and exclaimed, "How am I bound to thank Thee, O merciful God, for having given me a judge so resolute in the discharge of his duty; and a son, who can yield so nobly to the authority of the laws!"

But the *goodness* of the unrenewed man is as a *morning cloud*; and as the *early dew* it *passeth away**. The king who could speak thus, sent troops about the same time into France, to abet the

* Hosea vi. 4.

urgundy in resisting the authority of the which he ought to have been condemned for murdering his own cousin, the duke of by the hand of hired assassins, in the midst activities of the French court. And the Wales went on to alarm and distress his ing such language with his dissolute com- s made the king fear his impatience to m might end in rebellion; and then cast- e on the anxiety which stung a fond father's appearing in parliament, when his expla- to have been heard, in a fantastic dress atin full of eylet holes, and at every eylet wherewith it was made, still hanging by Solomon said, that *he hated all his labour had taken*; when he thought within him- loubtful it was, whether the person who ceed him, and who must *rule over all* the s toil, and over all he had gained by his ould prove *a wise man or a fool*. And ng doubt had king Henry, *to cause his despair of all the labour which he had taken sun* *.

tice of God was especially conspicuous in lenry suffer as a parent; since the king till his death, in wounding the broken ne who was, like himself, a sovereign and by detaining in captivity James, son and e king of Scotland. The detention of this ince was most cruel, as it was the work of full of mercy, as it proceeded from Him es the wicked fulfil His designs. For I. a meek and good man, being unable alth, to conduct the government of a rude d their violent nobles, and unwilling to e happiness of his subjects to his eldest ly profligate son, the duke of Rothsay,

* Eccles. ii. 18. 20.

children to school, to learn whatever the masters could teach *. But it had also obliged the king, as the price of its granting the desired supplies, to promise submission to several unusual restraints; as, that he should name sixteen counsellors, by whose advice he would be guided; without the power of dismissing them unless convicted of some misdemeanor.—That any persons about his court, attempting to make him dissatisfied with his subjects, should lose their places and be fined.—That the disposal of his revenue should be prescribed by the parliament.—That he should set apart two days in every week for receiving petitions.—That no members of his household should be allowed to approach him with any request, when his council was not sitting.—And that all the great officers of state should be sworn to observe the laws of the land.

The conditions to which the sovereign was thus tied down, were, for the most part, not long observed, nor insisted upon. But the commons accustomed the crown to allow of their appropriating their grants to such purposes as they judged fit; and they put a firm and decisive stop to the king's requesting the interference of the lords, in debates on subsidies. Whilst the parliament farther established the right of having the acts entered upon its rolls in the presence of a deputation from both houses; securing thereby, for the future, that the laws, assented to by the king, should be conformable to their petitions †.

It may be doubted whether the king felt enough interest in the welfare of his subjects in Ireland to have his vexations much increased by the state of

* How great the liability of the people to be overreached, through their general ignorance, was thought to be in cases of but little difficulty, appears from an act of nearly the same date; which forbade the gilding of rings and of various utensils, unless intended for church use; because purchasers, it said, were continually deceived into buying plated goods for pure metal.

† See page 295.

that country, where his son John was defeated and wounded by rebels, under the very walls of Dublin; whilst the Anglo-Irish gentry were reduced to the expedient of paying a tribute, called black-rent, to the neighbouring chieftains of original Irish descent, as the price of permission to live near them. Yet he could not but share somewhat of that irritation which both his Irish government and the English parliament unwisely displayed in angry laws; forbidding the Anglo-Irish even to traffick with the persons, whose protection they were glad to purchase; and, at the same time, increasing the numbers of their needy and desperate foes, by ordering all Irish mendicants to quit England.

Such were the cares and sorrows which the temptation of a crown had seduced the unhappy Henry to purchase with many crimes. He found no happiness to compensate for these, in the aggrandisement of his family; though he was enabled to marry his two daughters, Blanche and Philippa, to the kings of Arragon and Denmark. Worn out by accumulated troubles, he sunk into a ^{Nov. 20,} premature old age, and died in his forty-_{1412.} seventh year.

The popularity which he had enjoyed as duke of Hereford, he had lost as a king. Yet his superstitious subjects had been much more shocked at his executing an archbishop, who had taken up arms against the existing government, than at the murdering Richard, of which they fully believed him guilty, after his dethronement and submission. It is not impossible, therefore, but that there may be truth in the story afterwards made public by a monkish eulogist of the archbishop; who asserts that his own father was told, by one of the royal household employed to convey the king's body by water to Canterbury for interment, that they only buried an empty coffin; the informant, assisted by two others, having tossed the body into the Thames,

between Barking and Gravesend, in their terror at a hurricane ; which they thought was raised by angry spirits, resolved to persecute his remains. Now it so happens that a more credible cotemporary, not likely to have any intention of confirming a tale to which he himself has made no allusion, has recorded the storm of wind and snow which occurred some days after Henry's death, as one of terrific violence. And, though one might have expected that any person, concerned in such a transaction, would have carefully kept his own secret, the fact is said to have been divulged over the dinner-table ; and *who hath babbling, but they that tarry long at the wine* * ?

CHAPTER II.

Henry V. surnamed, of Monmouth.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperor of Germany.</i>	A.D.	<i>King of Scotland.</i>	A.D.
Sigismund.		James I.	
<i>King of France.</i>		<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
Charles VI.		Manuel II.	
		John VI.	1421
<i>Popes.</i>			
John XXIII.	Benedict XIII.	Gregory XII.	
	Martin V.		1417

HENRY V. was but twenty-four years old, when he succeeded his father. By the world he has been much praised for obtaining such a conquest over

* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

self, at an age when the passions are supposed to be the strongest, as enabled him to cast off, at once, his dissolute habits and loose companions; and to become, from henceforward, a statesman and a king. The truth is, however, that he continued to be the slave of powerful passions till death called him away to the world of spirits. The change wrought in him was no more than this; finding himself possessed of a kingdom, with a warlike people for his subjects, he yielded his heart to the temptations which ambition held out to his hopes; and the thirst for glory, having entered into his soul, took such a possession of it, that, from the hour he became a king, he had neither time nor thoughts to devote to the more grovelling propensities which he hitherto indulged. But when the souls he corrupted by drawing them from peaceful occupations, were the guilt of his unjust wars, and when the destruction of his fellow creatures, slain to gratify pride, shall come to be reckoned before Him, *these judgments are true and righteous altogether*, it will then be known, whether *the last state of this was not worse than the first* *.

It is evident that no blessing attended the change in his character. His desire to be praised of men, which, in a monarch, is a sufficient motive to lead to several wrong acts; such as, setting the injured earl of Northumberland at liberty; restoring the inheritance of the deys to their banished heir; acknowledging that Edward II. had been kind to his boyish years, and before removing that king's body, with much honour, to Westminster Abbey. But, on the other hand, he was permitted to range himself with those unhappy men who were bent on persecuting the servants of God.

Archbishop Arundel had issued peremptory orders, that no man should presume to publish any trans-

* Matt. xii. 45.

lation of even a single text of the Bible, without first consulting his bishop upon it; though there was probably not a single prelate learned enough to examine the scriptures in their original tongues, to see whether any proposed translation was correct or not. He had also insisted, that every head of a college, in Oxford, should make diligent inquiries, and question each scholar, at least once a month; to ascertain whether any member of his college was even suspected of defending, or holding, opinions forbidden by the Romish Church. But still the archbishop could not help perceiving, that all his efforts to keep the nation in darkness must fail of producing the desired effect, so long as Lord Cobham should continue the very opposite course, which he had been for some time pursuing. This nobleman was charged, by the Romish clergy, with maintaining a number of heretical preachers in those counties where his estates laid; by whose teaching ignorant persons were seduced into reading, or hearing, the Scriptures in their native tongue; and were encouraged to speak disrespectfully of the images of saints. As, however, Lord Cobham's courage and integrity made him respected both by the king and the people, it was thought advisable to obtain the sovereign's sanction before legal proceedings began. The archbishop, therefore, waited upon Henry; who promised, that he would himself point out to Lord Cobham the duty of submitting to the Church. But when the opportunity occurred, he was surprised to find, that this loyal subject, in the full spirit of his divine Master's command, was most ready to pay to the king all the respect and every duty which he owed him; but was, at the same time, firm as a rock in his resolution to *render unto God, the things that are God's* *. "To my prince, next to my eternal God," replied Lord Cobham to the king, "I owe all obedience; and

*. Matt. xxii. 21.

yield it, as I have done ever, in all that belongs to my property or person; ready, at all times, to fulfil whatever you shall, in the Lord, command me. But as to the Pope, and his ecclesiastics, I owe them neither suit, nor service: forasmuch as I know him to be the great *antichrist* *, *the son of perdition* †, the open adversary of God ‡."

The king was much too ignorant of the word of God, to be able to comprehend the grounds on which Lord Cobham entertained that deep abhorrence of the papal system, which he had thus expressed. He, therefore, now made no scruple of authorising the archbishop to proceed with all the vigour which that prelate had already exhibited in the prosecution of heretics. Upon this, Arundel sent a summoner to Cowling Castle, Lord Cobham's residence, to cite him into the spiritual court; but the man was refused admission within the castle gates. A citation, affixed to the doors of Rochester Cathedral, was equally unnoticed by this determined nobleman. When, however, the archbishop went on to excommunicate him for contumacy, and called upon all Christians, under frightful curses, to aid and abet the ecclesiastical authorities, "against such a seditious apostate, heretic, troubler of the public peace, and enemy of the realm," Lord Cobham thought proper to draw up a statement of his relief, and present it to the king, with a request that he would suffer it to be examined, "by the most godly, wise, and learned men of his realm;" that their deliberate opinion upon it might decide how justly such names had been bestowed upon him. But Henry was, by this time, too much alienated from him to do him justice. He refused to read, or even to accept the paper; allowed the archbishop's summons to be served upon Cobham in his presence; and sent him under arrest to the Tower, there to

* 1 John. ii. 18.

† 2 Thess. ii. 3.

‡ Rev. xiii. 6.

remain a prisoner till the day fixed for his appearance in the spiritual court.

From the English bishops, who would be his judges there, he could not have the least hope of an impartial hearing. For not only had they already condemned his conduct and opinions, in their synod, as heretical; but it was notorious that, in the late reign, he had given them especial ground for hating him; he being the very person who had moved the commons to petition that Henry IV. would deprive the prelates of their immoderate wealth. He, therefore, now requested to be allowed any other trial than one before them. The peers, he knew, would not take upon them to supersede the jurisdiction of the spiritual court; so he desired to be permitted to clear himself, either by the oaths of a hundred knights and esquires, who should vouch for his not being a heretic; or by wager of battle against some champion, to be named by the clergy.

Our pride needs to be mortified by the painful discovery of weaknesses in the best of men, or God would not have suffered the prejudices of education and habit still to retain such power over this searcher of the scriptures, as prevented his perceiving that an appeal to the sword, though sanctioned by the customs and the laws of his age and country, was exceeding folly; being, in truth, an offer to prove the purity of his faith, by acting in direct opposition to the commands of the Lord*. If Christ had appeared for a moment, to encourage any resort to the sword, it was that he might the more pointedly condemn it when it would have been thought by men most justifiable†.

Being refused both these requests Lord Cobham appealed from the Archbishop's jurisdiction to the Pope himself; after the example of St. Paul, who appealed from Nero's unjust officers to their still

* Matt. v. 39.

† Compare Luke xxii. 36—38. with Matt. xxvi. 52.

righteous prince ; that his persecution might, give him the means of bearing witness to him before a Roman court. But his desire to withdraw this appeal was only more angrily rebuffed by King Henry, than his prior requests. His appearance in the archbishop's court being thus unavoidable, it was seen, when the day of trial came, that He who had suffered the king to thwart

Cobham's devices for eluding his enemies, had not deserted His servant ; but had chosen to appear Himself, by making His faithfulness to appear manifest to men, in *giving him a mouth and wisdom, which his adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist* ; and by doing this, where the celebrity of the occasion would necessarily fix the attention of the members on whatever should be said, that the opportunity which Cobham was to be enabled to place in the public light might convert some, and strengthen the faith of many.

When Lord Cobham was brought into Sept. 23, by the governor of the Tower, Arch- 1413.

Arundel informed him that the last synod had declared his opinions heretical ; and that he had been excommunicated for contumacy ; but that the excommunication might still be withdrawn, if he would meekly request it. Of this offer Lord Cobham took no notice ; but desired permission to present a document which he took from his bosom, in which contained, he said, an account of the opinions he had long held, and hoped ever to abide in, touching the points objected to him. This being granted, he delivered a copy of it to the bishops. To which Arundel observed to him, that there were many good things in this confession of his faith, but that the court required an explicit answer to the question, whether he believed that any of the

material of the bread remained, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, after the priest had used the words of consecration? To this question Lord Cobham refused, and persisted in refusing, to give any other answer than that he would stand to death by what he had already read, and delivered into the court. He was consequently remanded to the Tower, whither the archbishop sent after him a copy of the determinations of himself and his poor ignorant coadjutors, upon the subjects concerning which he was charged with holding heretical opinions; and an order that he should be prepared to answer with precision whether he did, or did not agree with them.

It was impossible that he should give his assent to articles, one of which took from God the glory due unto His name, to transfer it to dry bones, and forgiven sinners; declaring that "It is meritorious for a Christian man to go on pilgrimages, and especially to worship holy relics and images of saints." Lord Cobham, therefore, thankfully accepted this warning from God, that he must resolve to die, rather than give way to what would be demanded of him; and he employed the day on which the court's sitting was suspended, which was the Lord's day, in earnest prayer for the promised help of the Holy Spirit*.

Sept. 25. His very first remark, when brought again before the bishops, shewed that he had found help in *the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit* †. "Lord Cobham," the archbishop began, "I said to you last Saturday, that you were accursed for your contumacy and disobedience to the holy church; thinking that you should with meekness have desired your absolution." "God hath said, by his holy prophet," was Cobham's re-

* Luke xii. 12.

† Eph. vi. 17.

ly, and he spoke with a cheerful countenance, *Maledicam benedictionibus vestris **," which is as much as to say, *I shall curse where you bless †*.

Still the archbishop proceeded, "Sir, at that time gently proffered to have absolved you, if you would have asked it. And yet do I the same, if you will humbly desire it, in due form and manner, as holy church hath ordained." Sawtre and Badby had heard that when Arundel spoke of *gentleness*, he meant their death by fire. But Lord Cobham was not to be thus ensnared into submitting his conscience to such keeping. "Forsooth will I not ask your absolution; for I have not trespassed against you ‡," said he. The next moment he knelt upon the pavement; and, holding up his hands toward heaven, he said: "I confess me here unto Thee, my eternal, Living God; that in my frail youth I offended Thee most grievously by pride, wrath, covetousness, and intemperance. Many men have been hurt in mine anger; and done many horrible sins. Good Lord, I ask Thee mercy."

He wept: but he had gained strength. And he stood up again, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Lo these are your guides, good people. Observe! For the breaking of God's law, and His great commandments, they never yet cursed me. But, for their own laws and tradition's sake, most cruelly do they handle both me and other men. And therefore both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall utterly be destroyed."

• Mal. ii. 2.

† These bishops knew too little of Scripture to have the context occur in their thoughts; but the fitness of its application shows, that Lord Cobham was not quoting what he had not meditated upon. He took the words, which encouraged him not to fear being cut off from communion with them, from this threat against such as they—*Now, O ye priests, his commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart. Mal. ii. 1, 2.*

‡ Ps. li. 4.

His examination was next begun ; and first with respect to the sacramental bread ; concerning which he had not wholly shaken off the prejudices of his early impressions, but thought, as Luther did after him, that it became the thing signified as well as the sign ; a doctrine afterwards known by the name of consubstantiation. He agreed, therefore, more nearly with his persecutors, than did many of his brother reformers. But the prelates would not be satisfied with any thing short of his saying, that there was actually nothing of the nature of bread left in the consecrated *wafer* *, as it is called ; though their own eyes saw it unchanged in their daily masses. Hence, though he said, “ I believe surely, that it is Christ’s body in the form of bread, the bread is the thing that we see ; and the flesh and blood of Christ is thereunder hid, and not seen, but by faith ”—one of the bishops cried out, “ It is a manifest heresy, to say that it is bread, after the sacramental words be once spoken. It is then Christ’s body only.” To which Lord Cobham replied, “ St. Paul the apostle was, I am sure, as wise as you be now, and more godly learned, and he called it bread ; writing to the Corinthians, *We are all partakers of that one bread* †.”

Again the archbishop spoke, “ We sent you a writing, concerning the faith of this blessed sacrament, clearly determined by the Church of Rome, our mother, and by the holy doctors.” “ I know none holier,” he replied, “ than Christ and his apostles. And as for that determination, I wote it is none of theirs ; for it standeth not with the scriptures, but manifestly against them.” Presently a Doctor Walden, prior of the Carmelites, checked him with this rebuke, “ Swift judges, always, are the learned scholars of Wickliffe.” “ As for the virtuous man Wickliffe,” said Lord Cobham in his reply, “ whose

* See p. 408.

† 1 Cor. x. 17.

judgments ye so highly disdain, I will here say, on
 my part, both before God and man, that till I knew
 that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from
 it. But since I learned therein to fear my Lord
 God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me. So
 much grace could I never find in all your glorious
 instructions." "It were not well with me," answered
 the prior, "if I had not grace to amend my life, till
 I heard the devil preach." "So," said Cobham,
 "did your fathers, the old Pharisees, ascribe Christ's
 miracles to Beelzebub; and his doctrine, to the devil.
 And you, as their children, hold the self-same judg-
 ment, concerning his faithful followers. They that
 rebuke your vicious living must needs be heretics;
 and that must your doctors prove, when you have
 no scripture to do it." Then, turning to the bishops,
 he proceeded, "to judge you, as you be, we need
 no farther than your own proper acts. Where
 do you find, in all God's law, that you should thus
 sit in judgment on any Christian man, or yet give
 sentence of death upon any, as ye do here daily?
 To ground have ye, in all the Scripture, to take it
 so lordly upon you; but in those two priests Annas
 and Caiaphas, who sate thus upon Christ, and upon
 his apostles, after his ascension. Of them only
 have ye learnt to judge Christ's members as ye do;
 and not of Peter. And let all men consider well
 this, that Christ was meek and merciful; the Pope
 proud and a tyrant. Christ was poor, and forgave;
 the Pope is rich, and a malicious man-slayer, as his
 daily acts do prove him."

From examining him respecting the authority of
 their Church, the court proceeded to ask, whether he
 consented to its determination about pilgrimage and
 image-worship, "Will you not worship good images?"
 asked one of the clergy. "What worship shall I give
 them?" said he. Instead of an answer to this, a friar
 Calmer thought to put him a closer question; "Sir, will
 you worship the cross of Christ, that He died upon?"

“Once again,” said Lord Cobham, “what worship shall I pay it?” “Such,” answered another, “as Paul speaketh of; and that is this; *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**.” It was difficult to reply to such a strange expounder of the Scriptures; but Lord Cobham spread out his own arms, and said, “This is a very cross. Yea, and so much better than your cross of wood, in that it was created of God. Yet will not I seek to have it worshipped.” This tempted the bishop of London to observe, “Sir, ye wote well that Christ died on a material cross.” “Yea,” replied Lord Cobham; “and I wote also, that our salvation came not by that material cross; but only by Him, who died thereupon. And well I wote, that holy Paul rejoiced in none other cross, but in Christ’s passion and death alone; and in his own suffering of like persecution with him, for the same truth.”

Weary of so many defeats, the archbishop said, time had been wasted; and the court must proceed to its conclusive sentence, unless he would submit, like an obedient child, to believe with the Church of Rome. “Do with me what you will,” was Lord Cobham’s firm reply; and a long sentence was accordingly read aloud by the archbishop, in his own name and that of his colleagues, condemning him “for a most pernicious, detestable heretic; and committing him to the secular power, to do him thereupon to death.” “Furthermore,” their sentence proceeds, “we excommunicate, and denounce accursed, not only this heretic here present, but so many else besides, as shall counsel him, or help him, receive him, or defend him, in favour of his error.”

The reading ended, Lord Cobham said, with as cheerful a countenance as his first words had been

* Gal. vi. 14.

oken, "though ye judge my body, which is but wretched thing, yet am I certain and sure, that ye shall do no harm to my soul; even as Satan could do none to the soul of Job. He that created that, will, according to His promise and infinite mercy, save it. And that I have no manner of doubt. And as to the injuries, which ye condemn in me, I will stand to them even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God."

He then turned around to the people, and, addressing them in a loud voice, and with much solemnity, he said, "Good Christian people, for the love of God beware of these men. For they will, we, beguile you, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves." After this, in imitation of his master, Christ, and in the very spirit of the first Christian martyr, Lord Cobham knelt down, and prayed for his enemies; lifting his hands and eyes towards heaven, and saying, in the hearing of all, "Lord God eternal, I beseech Thee, for Thy great mercy's sake, to forgive my persecutors; if it be Thy will?" So closed this memorable scene; for, when he had uttered these words, he was conveyed back, prisoner, to the Tower.

The archbishop had spoken in his sentence of pitying Lord Cobham with fatherly compassion, and of, "proceeding with great heaviness of heart," at his condemnation. He little knew that he thereby only made the whole more closely resemble a picture drawn long before, to warn such unhappy men of the Almighty's especial wrath. *Hear I pray you, ye the prophet Micah *, O heads of Jacob, who hate the good, and love the evil.—Who eat the flesh of my people, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as flesh within the caldron.—Prophets that make my people err; that bite with their teeth, and say, peace. Against him that putteth not into their*

* Chap. iii. 1. 11.

mouths, they even prepare war. Then comes a threat, that the false seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners confounded, hireling priests, who would build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. Whilst the faithful servant of God says of himself, *Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of might; to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his iniquity.* Such had Lord Cobham stood forth, in this assembly of the priests of a church as grievously corrupted, as that against which Micah bare witness. He was himself in their power; yet was he, amongst them, like a giant rejoicing to run his course; for he felt that within him, which assured him Christ was faithful, who taught His people to expect, that *The Comforter should abide with them for ever* †.

In an age when the commonalty were disposed to regard every noble as a being of almost a different species from themselves, the behaviour and language of such a man as lord Cobham, whom *the working of the mighty power* of The Spirit had elevated far indeed above those called his peers, could not have failed to produce a strong impression on many who witnessed or heard the details of his trial. To destroy the effect of this impression before they ventured on bringing him publicly to the stake, the prelates had recourse to an expedient which their party frequently employed afterwards for the like purpose. They circulated a forged writing in his name; in which the people were to believe that he had written thus, “ I now remembering myself, and coveting by this mean to avoid that temporal pain which I am worthy to suffer as an heretic, do freely and thoroughly confess, that my most blessed lord pope John, has full power to be Christ’s vicar on earth.” In short, this pretended recantation contained a disavowal of all those opinions which gave

• Micah iii. 8.

† John xiv. 16.

‡ That is, deputy.

ence to the priests. But while they were taking care to make their victim contemptible, by persuading the people that lord Cobham had thus timidly given up what he had, but a few days before, so manfully maintained; other counsels had resolved that this faithful witness to the truth should not receive his *exceeding great reward*, till he had yet borne testimony against them and their church, for some time longer among men. It pleased God that a way of escape should be made for him from the Tower. In what manner he got out is unknown; but he reached Wales in safety; and continued about four years concealed in its fastnesses, or harboured by his own tenantry in Herefordshire.

The next winter there were strange reports, that lord Cobham had been sending agents and letters to all parts of England, to engage the Lollards, with promises of high pay and rich spoil, to gather towards London, and join him in a rebellious war. The king was even told, that conspirators had descended and resolved to seize him and his brothers at Northampton, and to put them all to death. And so persuaded was he of the fidelity and correct information of those who told him this wild tale, that he suddenly broke up his court there, and removed to Westminster. Nor did he feel himself safe there, without prompt and decisive measures for defeating his imagined foes; calling, therefore, the nobles and knights of his household together at dusk, he told them that the Lollards were assembling in immense numbers in St. Giles's fields; and that they must immediately arm to accompany him thither. This intelligence astonished them; and they advised his waiting till the next morning, that he might see by daylight what their numbers really were, and who were with him, and who against him. But the king said "No—If the Lollards are not prevented, they have determined on burning Westminster abbey, St. Paul's, and all the friaries in London." At

their sovereign's bidding, therefore, the party armed, and rode off about midnight to St. Giles's; Jan. 7, 1714. Henry having taken the precaution of ordering that the gates of London should be kept closed, to prevent the Lollards in the city from joining those without.

The project for surprising the rebels was well devised on the part of the king. But when they reached the spot, instead of bursting in upon a numerous host, who were to be terrified by their sudden attack, they found but here and there a straggler; who, when asked whither he was going, replied, in search of lord Cobham. At last, amongst some thickets, near the present Artillery ground, they came upon such a number of persons, that they were able to seize six-and-thirty of them, including a sir Roger Acton, and a preacher named John Beverley; whom it is much more probable that the rest were assembled to hear, by stealth, in this time of persecution, than that he was come there to join them in midnight acts of violence.

It should now have been evident to the king, that the stories he had heard of 20,000 Lollards in arms, and of which he might have observed that the knights about him knew nothing, were but mischievous slanders, invented to make him hate that portion of his subjects; and very probably by the same persons, who had managed to have some poor Lollards persuaded that they would meet lord Cobham, if they went that night to St. Giles's fields. But Henry was too much prejudiced to reason wisely on what he had seen and been told. He had Acton and Beverley, and their humbler companions hanged for traitors; and then burned for heretics. After which, having his mind still full of the unjust suspicions artfully fomented by the Romish prelates, he got an act passed, in which the Lollards were charged with confederating and exciting each other, "to annul and subvert the Christian faith, and the

of God, within the realm of England; and to rove the king, and all manner of estates in the e his realm, as well spiritual as temporal." For pretended guilt of theirs, the act proceeded to rge and empower all justices of the peace, to ch out and arrest every Lollard they could hear that he might be tried for heresy by the bishop. The friends of the Lollards in parliament seem ave been afraid at this time of owning the in- est they took in that party; seeing the confession their affection for it would now have exposed m to be condemned as heretics. They, there- e, preferred endeavouring to weaken the power the ruling church, by again proposing to the king enrich himself with the seizure of the prelates' ates. To prevent his taking this advice, the dig- aries of the Romish church consented to, and re- mended, his taking possession of a hundred and alien priories*. They could not, however, but lect, that the ease with which this church property s thus transferred to the king, might induce him seize more, on some future occasion; and the elates became afraid, that their young king's evi- nt love of power might tempt him to increase his eatness at home, by taking advantage of the wil- gness of parliament to aid him in insisting on still re important sacrifices from them. Hence arch- hop Chicheley, who had now succeeded to the nacy on Arundel's death, is charged with having rised Henry to seek for aggrandisement by the asion of France, as a means of turning his ambi- n into a channel less dangerous to the priesthood. There was much to tempt the king's ambition, en he considered how the resources of France st have been checked and wasted, for the last ty-four years, under a sovereign sometimes re-

See note p. 97. An alien priory was one whose prior was account- to the abbot of some *monastery* abroad, for the rent of its estates.

duced for many months together to a state of absolute idiotcy, and when best, incapable of any wise resolutions; with princes of the blood ready to tear each other, and their country, in pieces, for money to spend on absurd pomp and gross excesses. The king of England knew, too, that the bravest, most powerful, and most frightfully wicked of these princes, the Duke of Burgundy, had invited him to send English troops into France, to aid him in his treasons; and he could have little doubt, but that this same restless and unprincipled duke would join an English army again, if promised a sufficient reward.

Henry, therefore, resolved on war; and surprised the French court by an arrogant demand, to have the crown of France given up to him; as having been the right, by inheritance, of his ancestor Edward III. *; and therefore, now, his. But the plea which was to be the English king's excuse to mankind, for putting to death, and despoiling, tens of thousands of his fellow-creatures, could scarcely hide from his own conscience the manifest injustice of his demand. For to maintain his claim, he was obliged to insist on two points, as undeniable. First, that the crown of France must descend by females, in failure of a nearer male heir; whether the laws or the wishes of the French nation were favorable to such a descent or not. And, secondly, that neither the consent of his subjects, nor long possession, could justify the descendant of a king who had obtained his crown to the injury of the lawful heir, in withholding it from the representative of that heir. If Henry was wrong in either of these assertions, then Charles VI. had a right to continue king of France. But if Henry was correct in his first assertion, and the claim of Edward III. also just; then, by the same rule, the right to the French crown

* See pp. 180, 181.

have descended, by the Duke of Clarence's daughter, to Earl Mortimer. Whilst if Henry were to abide, honestly, by the second rule laid down in his argument, he was bound not only to acknowledge, that he himself could have no right to the French throne; but that he ought to resign even the English one to the same nobleman.

Each claim could not be made the subject of passion, without reminding those who debated it, that if the rules of ordinary inheritance ought, in all cases, to regulate the transfer of kingdoms,

Earl Mortimer had a clear right, however hitherto overlooked, to be the king of England. Henry V. had, therefore, no great reason to be surprised on discovering, whilst his army was preparing Southampton for the invasion of France, that a kinsman and a supposed friend, the Earl of Cambridge and Lord Scroop, were at the head of a conspiracy for dethroning him; to give Lord Mortimer the English crown. When charged Aug. 2, 1415.

this they confessed their intentions; the king, condemning them to death, thus bore remarkable testimony to his own opinion of the folly of attempting the overthrow of a reigning monarch, on no better ground than the defectiveness of his father's title, to the kingdom he had possessed and bequeathed.

The Earl of Cambridge, thus beheaded, was brother to the notorious Earl of Rutland, now Duke of Buckingham; and had married Anne, sister to Earl Mortimer. In his orphan son the rights and titles of both these great houses were eventually united; as

Duke and Mortimer left no children. It was perhaps, the expectation of this, which instead of contenting the Earl of Cambridge with the present prospect of his son's future wealth, tempted him to desire more; and to endeavour procuring for his brother-in-law a crown, which Lord Mortimer himself seems not to have coveted. But Mortimer

was not only unambitious, he proved his submission to the king, by sitting as one of the Earl of Cambridge's judges; whilst the Duke of York had the decency to make over his right of voting to a proxy, Beaufort, Earl of Dorset; grandson to John of Gaunt, and his last wife, dame Catherine Swynford. Another of the blood royal, the king's brother Thomas, lately made Duke of Clarence, presided on the trial. Thus were six near relations, the Earls of Cambridge, Mortimer, and Dorset, the Dukes of York and Clarence, and the king, all alike descended from a common ancestor so little removed as Edward III. and yet the first willing to have slain the last; and the last ordering the death of the first, whilst the others either expressly consented thereto, or made no exertions to save him, by petitioning Henry for mercy. When the hindrances which human laws, providentially, put in the way of our satisfying our malignant passions, are removed, or weakly felt, then it becomes painfully evident, that the Scripture does not exaggerate the evil effects of strife; where it declares, that *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer* *.

The king's impatience to begin his attack on France had made him hasten the trial and execution of his cousin and Lord Scroop; so that he was still able to quit Southampton harbour by the 13th of August, when the wind had become fair. On the 14th he entered the mouth of the river Seine with 24,000 archers and 6,000 men-at-arms, besides their uncounted followers, on board a fleet of 1,500 sail; partly gotten together by hiring ships from the Hollanders, and partly by issuing an order that every English vessel of twenty tons burden, and upward, should be pressed, on this occasion, into the king's service. His army contained the flower of the English gentry for bravery; for the ambitious spirit of the nation

* 1 John iii. 15.

the invasion of France a very popular measure, notwithstanding its manifest iniquity; and the parliament had voted so large a supply, that, with a further sum obtained by pawning his jewels, the king had collected nearly £300,000 wherewith to prosecute the war; which again enabled him to offer high pay* as, with the hope of abundant booty, filled up his ranks with volunteers.

The French, on the other hand, had made very little preparation for the defence of their country; being prevented, partly by the distraction in their councils, and partly by the hope which they had entertained, that Henry, who had given up his first demands, would accept the very profitable terms on which they were willing to purchase his forbearance. Hence his landing was unresisted; and the siege of Harfleur, which he immediately began, was allowed to proceed nearly six weeks, without any attempt to relieve the town; which was, therefore, at that time, obliged to surrender uncondi-

tionally. Men, women, and children were, Sept. 26.
in consequence, punished for the defence of their cities, by an order that they must quit their native land for ever; and must carry off no more of their property than a few cloaths; and ninepence to purchase food withal, till they could find friends, or their sustenance. The besiegers now exulted in themselves in possession of houses which they had not built, and of riches which they had laboured to collect; but the king of England should have sighed over the calamities, to which his ambition had already exposed his subjects. When he evacuated Harfleur, and sent back his sick and wounded, he found his disposable force to be but the army which had quitted home at his summons; such had been the destructive effects of a

* A bowman was to receive 11½d. a day; the average price of a bushel of corn being but 12s. 8d.

dysentery in the English camp, brought on by the unguarded indulgence of the soldiers in fruits stolen, unripe, from the neighbouring gardens ; and by the stench emitted from dead horses, and the offal of slaughtered cattle, which our uncleanly forefathers suffered to lie unburied amongst their tents. Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk ; the Earl of Arundel ; and Courtney, Bishop of Norwich, ill employed in sharing this sinful war ; were among those slain by the dysentery ; and the Earls Marshall and Mortimer, with the Duke of Clarence, were obliged to be carried back to England for the recovery of their health.

In the meanwhile the French king had arrived at Rouen with 100,000 men ; being reported to be nearly half as many more. Against such a host Henry could not think of leading his small forces ; and yet his pride, as he confessed, tempted him to expose his subjects and companions in arms to almost certain destruction, rather than have it said he had fled home. Instead therefore of embarking his troops, he resolved on endeavouring to reach Calais by land ; though the only object he could propose to gain by it, was that of being entitled to boast of having traversed three hostile provinces, in defiance of all the power of France. To elude, however, coming to a contest with such disproportionated numbers, he attempted to leave the French behind him ; by taking a shorter line of march as near to the sea shore as might be found practicable. Pursuing this course, he wished to pass the river Somme at the ford discovered by his grandfather, Edward III. * ; but he found it strongly guarded, and was, therefore, obliged to proceed several days' march higher up the river, and, consequently, farther into the heart of the country. Whilst the French troops, hovering

* See page 209.

etimes prevented his men from collecting food for the day. This interruption gave body of the French army sufficient time to and his front and intercept his march; by p a position near the village of Agincourt, Calais side of him. They were under the l of D'Albret, grand constable of France. rles VI. and his sons remained at Rouen; een earnestly advised thereto by the duke , who was old enough to remember the of his father, king John, and his own flight tiers *, fifty-nine years before this; which n now say; "it would not be so bad to lose e, as to lose both the king and the battle." hought of what had passed at Cressy and had a material effect on others, besides the Berry. It prevented the English from re-victory as quite out of their reach. And it D'Albret to draw up the French army be-o woods, as though it had been necessary to flanks protected. Whereby he so narrowed , that the English could march up to it danger of being surrounded; whilst the im-periority of the French in cavalry became a useless advantage, from his not allowing fficient room to move freely. During the l rainy night of the 24th of October, the of the English camp were within three flight of this position; so that the way in ch army passed the hours of darkness was f observation to the other. From the French e heard bursts of laughter and merriment; en who hoped soon to share valuable spoils, would drown some misgivings in wine and s. In the English camp, there was the of armour and the call of watchful senti-d before the sun had risen, the king had

* See page 237.

bade summon his men to confession and to mass. He himself heard mass celebrated three times before he put his armour on. For so low had the knowledge of religion fallen amongst those who chose to shut their ears against the teaching of the Lollards, that, instead of regarding the sacraments as appointed means of testifying our reverence for Christ's commands, by which faithful partakers may hope to be admitted to a closer union with Him, men looked upon the commemoration of the Lord's Supper *, as a sacrifice which, if performed by the priests, would operate like a charm to the benefit of the bystanders, and would be thrice as beneficial if witnessed thrice. Having gone through these forms, king Henry and his subjects thought they might the more safely proceed to slay the people whose country they had unjustly invaded; and whose sins they were indeed destined to punish.

The pride of the French nobility had again made them despise the orders of their commander, and push forward to the front of their army; thus getting before their own archers, who could consequently make no use of their bows; and leaving the common men in the centre and rear, without officers to regulate their movements. But when these high-spirited lords had so indiscreetly seized upon the post of honor, they found themselves obliged to halt there. For the ground under their horses, and before them, was a new ploughed field of miry clay; which the preceding rains, and the trampling of many thousand horsemen, whilst moving into their position on the day before, had worked up into such deep mud, that these heavy armed cavalry could only move by plunges. Henry would gladly have seen the French knights attempt to charge through it; but the traditions of the battle of Poitiers were too well remembered. Hence they now listened to

* Called by Romanists, the mass.

D'Albret's command, and waited to see whether the English would venture to attack them or retire. From nine in the morning till ten they remained in this state of suspense, the dispiriting effects of which, and the real advantage of being poor in spirit, were seen in some whose natural haughtiness was so subdued, as to suffer them to sue for pardon from neighbours whom they had injured, and embrace rivals whom they had hated. Oct. 25.

The halt of the French had disappointed Henry. But he adroitly took advantage of the pause, to let his men take a meal of victuals carried to them in their ranks; whilst he himself went from banner to banner, to say a word of encouragement; telling one who wished every idle knight at home could be with them, That he would be sorry to have a man more to abate the glory of the victory. He was, at the same time, waiting till a handful of soldiers sent off unobserved from his rear, should distract the attention of the French, by raising an alarm on their right. As soon, therefore, as he observed smoke bursting out of a priory, towards which those men had been directed to proceed, he and his nobles dismounted; and the order for advancing was given to the archers who composed his foremost ranks. At that moment a priest stood forward holding up the consecrated wafer; and the whole army knelt, whilst each put a piece of earth into his mouth, in token of his willingness to partake, if he could have done so, of the Lord's body; as though the holy and merciful Saviour had been the heathen Mars, of whom they might ask help, not for self-defence, nor to stay the violence of the oppressor, but to oppress. The next minute they had risen with an universal shout, and were running forward. After twenty paces, they halted to recover breath; and then they shouted and ran again; and thus they approached the French.

Besides his bow and arrows, every archer had an

axe or dagger, and a long stake sharpened at both ends, to be fixed obliquely in the ground before him and break the charge of the enemy's horse. Other armour they had none. Many of them were naked, or stripped to the waist; having thrown off every thing that could impede the free use of their limbs; as they knew that the effect of their arrows depended on the bodily strength with which the bow was stretched. Their first volley was murderous. And when D'Albret ordered a chosen body of 1200 gentlemen to gallop round these English archers and attack their flank, so many were shot as they advanced, or stopped in their course by the depth of the mire, or had their horses stuck with arrows which, if they did not absolutely disable them, made them frantic with pain and terror, that most of the rest fled back; whilst no more than a hundred and fifty arrived near enough to come to blows with the English. A few more flights of arrows had slain so many French nobles, and had reduced this crowded, and from the first, disordered host of knights, to such an embarrassed mass of cumbrously armed men, entangled with the fallen, and trodden down by unmanageable horses, trampling upon or trampled by each other, that dismay at the sight made the mob of unofficered foot-soldiers immediately behind them, break up and disperse in flight. Yet the irrecoverable confusion did not prevent such large portions of the French army from combating bravely, as were alone enough to be very formidable to the English. A blow with an iron mace had at one time stricken Henry down upon his knees; and the duke of York, so unhappily notorious under his older titles of Rutland and Albemarle*, being now grown fat and unwieldy, was suffocated in the press. Again the king was in danger from the duke of Alençon's sword; who,

* See pages 367—9; 378; and 391.

having fought his way up to the royal standard, cleft a crown of gold and jewels, which Henry wore this day, above his helmet. So bold an attack cost the assailant his life. And now the English archers had cast their bows behind them, and were using their daggers among the broken cavalry; and great numbers of the knights and lords of France had yielded themselves prisoners to gentlemen of England, when some armed peasantry attacked the defenceless English camp, and putting to flight the sutlers and grooms, created such an alarm in the rear of the English army, that Henry fearing his captives might be rescued and turn against their captors, issued his command that they should all be slain. He was obeyed by men who felt little other objection than what arose from their dislike to losing the money, which they would otherwise have received for the redemption of their prisoners of knightly rank. Happily, however, the unimportance of what had produced the alarm was discovered in time to save some of the captives; and the English pushed on again to engage, and succeeded in putting to flight, the last division of that mighty host which the morning had seen arrayed against them.

The conquerors had now only to collect prisoners once more; and the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon were in the list of their captives. Among the dead on the French side, were the dukes of Alençon, Brabant, and Bar, the grand constable, and the admiral of France, seven counts, and 8000 knights and gentlemen, the flower of that gallant chivalry, whose pride had been so fatal to their army. Whereas the English had lost in all but 600 men; of whom the earl of Suffolk, slain in fight, was the only person of distinction; besides the duke of York.

For so complete a victory king Henry bade his chaplains sing latin hymns of thanksgiving on the spot; and then, after a night's rest, he and his army crossed the field of battle again on their way to

Calais; and, with a barbarity which would be abhorred by modern soldiers, they killed as many of the wounded French as they found still alive upon the ground. Yet the youth of Christian England are encouraged to be proud of their relationship to the conquerors of Agincourt; those archers, who put off the dress of a civilized people, to be seen like naked savages besmeared with blood; those misnamed gentlemen of England, who could cut the throats of the nobles of France, when disarmed in trust of their protection; those knights and those priests who could desire and who could suffer sacraments and hymns to be mixed up with robbery and murder, and with the slaughtering of the forsaken and the wounded, when lying in a state of helplessness. It should be our shame, instead of being our boast, that the ferocity of our forefathers fitted them to be the instruments of divine wrath, even as the evil spirits are; when God, in his justice, saw fit to heap affliction on a nation that had succeeded in rooting out all His people from their borders, till they had none amongst them to turn away His righteous anger, by *the fervent prayer which availeth much* *.

Though so much more successful than prudence would have allowed him to reckon upon being, Henry V. could not but perceive, that all the blood which had been shed, did not make it a whit the less expedient for him to escape with speed from France. He therefore ordered his soldiers to burn such spoils as would have retarded their march; and

Nov. 2. on the eighth day after his victory, he embarked at Calais, for England. His reception at Dover, and in London, was accompanied with such marks of joy and tumultuous triumph, as showed that his people fully consented to the ambition of their king. Yet the expences of this short

* James v. 16.

paign had not only emptied the treasury; but obliged Henry to borrow money, by mortgag- part of his future revenue to the lenders; at head of whom was his chancellor and uncle, ufort, bishop of Winchester, a base-born son of n of Gaunt. The king found it advisable, there- , to pause awhile. Hence the arrival, in Eng- l, of the German emperor Sigismund, was aliarly gratifying to Henry's pride; by ^{April 7.} 1416. ing the interruption of the war appear to eed from his moderation, rather than from his ility to renew it with any prospect of making nanent conquests. For the emperor came to iate a peace, if possible; being exceedingly de- as that Henry V. and Charles VI. as the two t powerful kings in Europe, should unite with , for the purpose of compelling the rival popes sign their titles, and submit to a council of pre- of the Romish Church, now sitting at Con- ce. Henry had already permitted some English sts and monks to represent their country in this cil; whereby the nation unhappily became ers in its dreadful guilt, when it condemned n Huss, and Jerome of Prague, to be burnt to h for heresy; two holy men *of whom the world not worthy*. On the other hand, Sigismund had little pretension to be received as an honourable trator between contending sovereigns. For his or had been pledged, in writing to Huss, that he ld come and depart from Constance in safety. l yet when the council, thirsting for the good 's blood, declared that such a promise was not ling, the emperor blushed on Huss's making a lic appeal to him for protection; but refused to d to his word. It was matter of indifference, ever, to Henry, whether Sigismund had, or not, given up his pledged honor at the bidding riests. The king served his own purposes, by ng the emperor negotiate a short truce between

England and France; and by inducing him to invite the duke of Burgundy to meet them both at Calais, where the latter listened to proposals for betraying his country to the English. In truth, Isabella, queen of France, the dauphin, and this duke were all acting in such a manner, that they could not have served king Henry more effectually, had they been taking his pay. The count of Armagnac, who governed at this time in king Charles's name, made an effort to recover Harfleur. But he was not merely ill supported by the French princes. The fear lest Paris should fall into the hands of some other faction, obliged him to watch it with part of the force which he should have led against the English; and the commerce of France was at so low an ebb, that he was obliged to hire Genoese ships, and seamen, to guard the mouth of the Seine. Such half-hearted opponents were defeated with little difficulty. The duke of Bedford, brother to Henry V. put to sea with several hundred sail; though the royal navy of England then consisted but of six large ships, eight barges, and ten boats. His fleet, therefore, must have been made up almost entirely of merchantmen, pressed into the king's service; yet he captured three Genoese carracks, whose decks were more than a spear's length above those of his largest vessel; and the rest were unable to resist his entering the Seine. Armagnac's army had already fled before the garrison of Harfleur; and the Count thenceforward employed himself, almost entirely, in extorting money from the Parisians; whom he kept in awe by executing any of the inhabitants, as soon as they gave him reason to suspect them of preparing to resist him. Whilst, on the other hand, the hatred he thus incurred tempted the duke of Burgundy to make open war against the supporters of the ministry; which again drove the count to draw off all the French king's forces from the coast, for the

Sept.
Aug. 15.
1416.

protection of the capital; especially when he heard that Queen Isabella had deserted him, to declare herself regent, and the duke her lieutenant.

Whilst France was thus torn to pieces by those who should have been its protectors, the English parliament voted Henry a third of the moveables of the laity, to be collected in certain fixed portions before a twelve-month should expire; and the clergy granted him a fifth of their incomes for the year. In fact the nation was full of the same spirit as tempts the gambler to lay down his money with a liberal air; for they confidently expected that the money which they now put into their king's hands, would win for them the spoils of the French. In addition to the resources thus freely supplied, he borrowed different sums, on pledges, from his nobles and prelates; and compelled the Italian bankers, residing in London, to lend him a large portion of their capital, in return for the protection which, he told them, they had known how to profit by. But it was now necessary to provide artillery as well as money; and an order of this date is still extant, for making 7000 stone balls for cannon, in the quarries at Maidstone; and another for preparing charcoal, and other materials, for the manufacture of a quantity of gunpowder. Whilst nearly half the men-at-arms, with whom the king was to cross the seas, were engaged for his service by the nobles and knights who accompanied him; and whose share, both of pay and plunder, was to be proportionable.

Thus prepared for conquest, and knowing that the duke of Burgundy was on his march to attack Paris, the king of England again embarked for France, with 16,000 men-at-arms, and, perhaps, as many archers; and landed them, unopposed, near the mouth of the river Seine. So formidable an invasion might have been expected to induce the French princes to forego their private feuds, till they should have driven the in-

Aug. 1.
1417.

vaders back to their ships ; but they were so blinded by mutual hate, that not an effort was made to help the Normans in their spirited resistance to the English. And when Henry had advanced as

Nov. 16. far as Alençon, the duke of Bretagne waited on him to request that his province, with Anjou and Maine, might remain neutral in the contest for the crown of France ; apparently thinking the kingdom might as well fall into the hands of a foreigner, as be at the disposal of any of the unprincipled chieftains who were combating round the capital.

About this time the abbot of St. Alban's received information, that lord Cobham was concealed in his neighbourhood ; and sent a party, by night, to seize him. They missed their prey ; but they were convinced that some desperate heretic must have been in the house ; as they found several English books there : and brought away a liturgy ornamented with figures of saints, the heads of which had been carefully erased. The owner of this liturgy had also blotted out such of the prayers as were addressed to saints ; and had written some notes, reprobating the worship of the Virgin Mary. On seeing these things, the abbot forwarded this liturgy to the king ; as a proof of lord Cobham's continuance in, what they called, heretical opinions. And the king sent it back to England, to the archbishop of Canterbury, with an order that it should be shown to the Londoners, by the next preacher at St. Paul's Cross. That they might see, said he, how far these Lollards went in their madness. For to be jealous of the observance of the second commandment was thought madness, by this poor ignorant monarch ; though God has, therein, deigned to call himself *jealous* of that honour, which He will not allow any thing *on the earth beneath*, nor yet *in heaven above*, to share with Him.

This proof of the king's unabated anger against lord Cobham, and the reward he offered for his ap-

rehension, occasioned that nobleman to be more
 keenly sought after; and he was, in consequence,
 soon discovered, in Wales, by some tenants of sir
 Edward Charlton, lord of Powys. They would
 scarcely, however, have effected his capture, had
 not a woman flung a stool between his legs; by
 which one of them was broken. In that wounded
 state lord Powys conveyed him, in a horse litter,
 to London; and there received the price of his blood.
 In Henry's absence, the duke of Bedford was regent
 of the kingdom; and he had him brought
 before his peers, to shew cause why he should Dec. 14.
 not be put to death under his former sentence.
 On this occasion lord Cobham reminded them,
 with much gravity, that it was the duty of men to
 show mercy; seeing that vengeance is declared to
 belong to God alone*; and thereby forbidden to
 man. The observation was strictly to the point.
 For he knew they meant his death by fire; a manner
 of putting to death evidently not intended for the
 mere prevention of what they thought criminal; but
 aiming to repay wickedness with proportionable
 pain. Whereas God hath said *I will repay*†;
 because he alone can read the thoughts of the heart,
 and therefore none but He can know the wickedness
 of the offender. Lord Cobham's words, however,
 fell on hard hearts; and the chief Justice requested
 the regent, not to let him waste their time, nor
 trouble the nobles any longer. He was, accordingly,
 ordered to speak no more of what did not belong to
 his defence. To which, after meditating a while,
 he replied, in the words of the apostle, *With me it*
is a very small thing that I should be judged of you,
or of men's judgment‡; and then, says the popish
 chronicler, "he again began to chatter what was
 nothing to the purpose." Those good words which
 this enemy has ascribed to him, and which he cer-
 tainly would not have invented for him, are too in-

* Rom. xii. 19.

† Ibid.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 3.

consistent with the idle language which he proceeded to put into lord Cobham's mouth, to permit one believing they were uttered; especially as it appears that lord Cobham found that needful help, which enabled him to *glorify* God by his *death* *. Being dragged on a hurdle from the Tower to St. Giles's fields, to let it be known that he was believed guilty of having plotted treason there, the pleasantness of his countenance was particularly remarked. When he reached the spot, he was desired to confess himself to a priest; but he replied, "that, if even Peter or Paul stood there, he would not confess to either of them, since one far greater, even God himself, was present; from whom alone he implored, and hoped for pardon; and to whom alone, therefore, he would make confession of his sins." This he said to rebuke their fond belief † that confession to a priest was necessary to salvation, as a means of obtaining pardon from his lips; without which, they thought the forgiveness of God could not be expected. He was then removed from his hurdle; and, falling on his knees, he prayed the Almighty to forgive his persecutors; after which he shortly addressed the surrounding throng; exhorting them to follow the laws of God, written in the Scriptures; and to beware of such teachers, as they might see, by their life and conversation, to be enemies to Christ. This said, he resigned himself, with cheerful courage, to the frightful death prepared for him; being suspended by chains, from a gallows, over the fire. Thus did lord Cobham die as he had lived; a faithful witness to the truth, as it is in Christ; having *chosen rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season—because he had respect unto the recompence of the reward* ‡.

It is delightful to think that God had now a people

* John xxi. 19.

† See page 259, 260.

‡ Heb. xi. 25, 26.

r long benighted land ; and it is not unreasonable to hope that there might be thousands, in it, though less known to fame than this Christian that Holy Spirit who is no respecter of persons, wrought the same wonderful and glorious works displayed in lord Cobham. We know, indeed, many were so harassed and terrified by their tutors, as to deny the faith which they had embraced with joy ; but there were others who boldly suffered themselves to be committed to the fire, as the fiery chariot by which they would ascend to heaven. They who remember the sentence passed against the house of Ahab *, saying *the servants of the Lord* ; and who reflect that it is still the same God that ruleth all the kingdoms of the earth ; they will not be surprised, when they read that the powerful house of Lancaster, having thus stained itself with the blood of saints, was wholly cut off in the next generation ; when Henry V. continued for a while to increase his worldly greatness, after the manner of those who God hath resolved to *set up in slippery places* †.

The resistance of the Normans had delayed the progress for a few months. But a reinforcement of 15,000 men, which joined him in the spring, enabled him to bring the siege of Cherbourg to a successful conclusion ; and as, whilst he resumed the office of the duke of Normandy, he proclaimed the imposition of an unpopular tax on salt, and was too busy to wage a ferocious warfare, after the manner of his predecessors, the Edwards, against the unwilling cultivators of the soil, his advance did not excite the French to any bitter, or general hostility. On the other hand the two great factions of Armagnacs and Burgundys were daily combating each other near Paris ; and when an attempt to bring the

* 2 Kings ix. 7.

† Ps. lxxiii. 18.

two parties to terms was defeated, by the obstinacy of the count, the Parisians rose in arms; threw him and many of his principal supporters into prison; and admitted the Burgundians into their city. The insurrection having begun at night, Tannegui de Chatel, the Armagnac mayor of Paris, entered the chamber of the king's only surviving son, and hastily wrapping him up in a blanket, carried him in his arms to the door; where he was placed before a horseman, who galloped with him to the Bastille; a celebrated fortress in the suburbs. But though Du Chatel attempted, some days after, to recover the city, he was defeated in a bloody battle fought in the streets. For several following weeks the Burgundians employed themselves in hunting down the Armagnacs, and imprisoning them. But when the jails were full, the populace, grown more furious, they found themselves more powerful, burst open the prison doors, and murdered all their inmates. A whole day, it was the Lord's day, did the citizens of Paris give up to massacring their helpless victims; not even sparing the mother who gave suck; and mixing up with their barbarity such jests, on the miseries and wounds of the dying, as have too often added peculiar horror to the cruelties of that unhappy people.

Such is the contrast between those who *walk according to the course of this world*, led by the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*; and those whom the working of the mighty power of God hath created in Christ Jesus unto good works†. How truly has it been said, *ye shall know them by their fruits*§. The same short period saw the former living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another||; a sovereign to whom God had given one kingdom, determined to seize another by violence;

* Eph. ii. 2.

† Ib. i. 19.

‡ Ib. ii. 10.

§ Matt. vii. 16.

|| Tit. iii. 3.

ces contending with such fury, as to let another spoil their cities unopposed; priests bent on every inquiry after the will of God, in England; citizens revelling in blood, at Paris: divines prelates baiting two holy martyrs, at Constance, though they had been wild beasts. Whilst it saw those, *to whom power was given to become sons of God**, filled with grace and love; possessed, even whilst the flames were lighting to torment them, of that *peace which passeth all understanding†*; and praying for those who despitefully and persecuted them‡. But, till the coming of that kingdom which *is not of this world§*, the envy of nations must pursue the tale of *the children of this world*.

When Henry had subdued all the lesser towns of Normandy, he proceeded to besiege Rouen, one of the most populous cities in France; protected on one side by the river Seine; and well fortified on every other. At his approach, the magistrates had ordered all families to depart, that were not provided with store of victuals for ten months; but in this they were only partially obeyed. On the other hand Guy de Boutellier, a Norman gentleman experienced in combats, entered the city with 4000 men-at-arms; and was invited to take the command of 5,000 citizens, training for the defence of their lives, their property, and their children. By his orders, the suburbs were burnt, and trees cut down; so that nothing might approach the walls unobserved. It was the end of July, when Henry^{1418.} appeared before the city; though 1600 half-naked men, in his service, had been hovering some time about it, to prevent the peasants from carrying in supplies. The English army took post in nine positions, immediately opposite to the nine gates of the city. They were repeatedly, and vigorously, at-

in i. 12. † Phil. iv. 7. ‡ Matt. v. 44. § John xviii. 36.

tacked by Boutellier; but the works destroyed one day were repaired the next, till trenches had been cut from one camp to another; so as to enable the English soldiers to pass, without being exposed to the cannon on the walls. Ditches were also dug, and fences made thick with thorns; so as gradually to increase the difficulty of sallying from the city, for the purposes either of attack or escape. Nor did king Henry take less pains to prevent all ingress or egress by the Seine. Above Rouen a bridge of boats was formed across the river; below, the passage of any vessel was prevented by three strong chains of iron, which crossed from bank to bank; one in the water; another on its surface; and the third some inches above. Whilst a Portuguese fleet, in English pay, watched the mouth of the Seine.

Having thus shut up the inhabitants within their walls, it became the king's object to prevent the chiefs of the nation from uniting, with an overpowering force, for its relief. He had already made a treaty with the duke of Burgundy, whose territories, in Flanders, were not far off; and he now affected to negotiate with him, as the real head of the French government. The duke offered him the French king's daughter, Catharine, in marriage, with ample dower; but Henry insisted on having 350,000 with her, besides Normandy, and all the provinces ceded to Edward III. by the treaty of Bretonne; and when the duke seemed willing to consent, the king declined entering into any stipulation with him, because his yielding up provinces would prevent the Dauphin from reclaiming them. The latter, now placed, by the Armagnacs, at the head of a respectable force, having Tannegui du Chastel as commander under him, Henry was carrying on a separate negotiation, at the same time, by accredited agents. And when the persons who directed the

in's councils, would also have satisfied all the demands of England; this treaty was in like manner broken off by the English; on the pretext, that a prince under age could not pledge his father's terms.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Rouen were beginning to find their stock of provisions insufficient.

But by means of a priest who managed to pass through the English lines, they made their case known to the duke of Burgundy. And when their messenger brought them back word that he, with the duke and queen Isabella, had marched as near as Beauvais, to relieve them; they daily waited for his coming till reduced to feed cats, dogs, horses, and still more unwholesome

Presently they obliged 12000 useless mouths, who were esteemed them, being aged men, women, and children, to leave their city; requesting Henry would permit them to pass, if he meant not to make war on the weak and infirm. But ambition had a much stronger hold on him than humanity. He refused to permit these poor creatures to enter his lines: and the desperate condition of the garrison tempted it to do so; with the like hardness of heart, in keeping the gates shut against their return into the city.

There were soldiers in Henry's camp who would not excuse his guilt in this; but saved some lives, by giving them their food with these starving outcasts. The greater part of them, however, soon perished from want and from cold; for winter was now setting in. Within the walls, famine and disease were, by degrees, rapidly thinning the inhabitants. Yet they hoped for relief. The duke had found means to convey assurances, that he would break through the English lines to them on the fourth day of Christmas. In this hope, the garrison resolved to continue the defence of the town. Before that time, the dead were 50,000. Its dawn was with feverish joy. But it passed, and no de-

liverer appeared. The next, the governor sent offers to king Henry of surrendering the city on terms; but Henry would grant none. They must yield, he said, without conditions. Whenever a fortified place had, hitherto, surrendered at discretion, the king had spoiled the inhabitants of all their property, and had hung more or fewer of them for having defended it. Here his deeper anger at their determined resistance was likely to make him unusually severe. His answer, therefore, made courageous men desperate. And Boutellier had no difficulty in leading them to resolve on setting fire to their native city; throwing down part of the wall which had been undermined; and bursting in a body into the English camp, either to win their way through it, or sell their lives as dearly as they could.

Their resolution was made known to the king of England; and, believing them capable of putting it into execution, policy made him spare what generosity could not. He consented to let the citizens redeem their lives and property by the payment of 100,000*l.*; and to allow the men-at-arms to retire whither they would, on swearing not to serve against him for a year. But he added this disgraceful exception to his unwilling mercy, that Alain Blanchard the mayor, with three citizens, a knight, and two gentlemen must be given up to the executioner; for having so actively opposed the enemy of their king and country. These terms were accepted; and Alain Blanchard, whose distinguished courage had excited Henry's vindictive passions, was beheaded in the English camp; whilst the others, threatened with the like punishment, were suffered to save their lives by surrendering the whole of their possessions.

*Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation**; and this can seldom have been more clearly exemplified than in the present war. For

* Matt. xii. 25.

king of England had now been allowed to go on conquering Normandy for a whole year and a half; as though it were nothing to the rest of France. He had not had one combat to sustain against any of the French princes; the army collected at Beauvais was dispersed without coming near him. Yet conquering the kingdom might have been thought as improbable as ever. Normandy was but one province out of twenty; and though left unassisted, Cherbourg and Rouen had, between them, detained him a twelvemonth in effecting their capture. A few more such sieges would have exhausted his means; as, by covenant with his knights and commanders, only one part in nine of the spoil belonged to the king; whilst the pay of his army was so high, that even a common archer received a shilling a day, which would procure as much bread as six shillings now. Hence, though the wealthy Count of Beaufort lent him a second loan of 25,000*l.* Hence, about this time, the payment of his army was already in arrears, and soon became more deeply so.

Nor could the king expect his parliament to continue those extraordinary grants, made to him in the nation was dazzled by the victory of Agincourt; and if he should be reduced to his ordinary revenue, it amounted to no more than 100,000*l.* a year; half of which was usually expended in watching the borders of Scotland, and maintaining the garrison and fortifications of Calais.

The surrender of Rouen was a grief to every Frenchman who loved his country; and seemed to have thrown all parties to the necessity of doing something to save France. Yet the Armagnacs made a separate truce with Henry in the name of the young Dauphin, in which step they were followed by the Duke of Burgundy; whilst neither party conditioned his desisting from making conquests, in districts not acknowledging their authority. By the middle of the following May, however, the duke

1419.

had so far advanced a negociation in king Charles's name, that Henry held a conference with queen Isabella in a field near Meulan, not thirty miles from Paris. Each came attended by a thousand men-at-arms; and leaving these halted at a short distance, each advanced with seventy attendants to a pavilion; into which entered king Henry, with his brothers the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, on one side; and queen Isabella, with her daughter Catharine and the duke of Burgundy on the other. The queen seems to have hoped, as a mother, that Henry would be so won by Catharine's appearance, as to grant her family more favourable terms; but instead of this, his late success made him rise in his demands. Hence the treaty was protracted, and at the end of another month it was broken off; the haughty manner and language of the king of England having irritated the duke beyond all bearing; at the same time that this French prince was receiving most earnest solicitations from Tannegui de Chatel, to come to terms with the Armagnacs.

The result was, that the duke and the dauphin were brought to meet—promised mutual forgiveness—and vowed to be good friends henceforth—each desiring his officers to swear, that they would desert his service for the other's, if he should prove faithless to this vow. A few days after the English surprised Pontoise, which had been the residence of the French court but a week before; and where the duke of Burgundy had left much of the money extorted from the Armagnacs during the violences in Paris. The capture of this place was followed by a most sinful slaughter of its unarmed and unresisting inhabitants; and the alarm this produced drove the court to Troyes in Champagne; whilst the dauphin was carried by Du Chatel into Touraine and Berry. There he speedily raised an army of 20,000 men, and returning with this force as far as Montereau, he sent to request a second

with the duke. Their first interview had acted in a manner, which evidently shewed the intention of each party ; that neither promises nor threats could bind men like themselves, to act another part, if any opportunity for treachery occurred. The bridge of Montereau was named Dauphin for the interview now proposed ; and barriers were fixed up at both ends of it, with a wicket in each ; whilst, on the centre of the bridge, a wooden apartment was erected ; having two entrances on its opposite sides. Each, on his coming upon the bridge, was to be obliged to pass through his wicket by ten confidential men, who were then to enter the door before him with arms fixed to the wall of these, as the room would hold four or five. As a farther precaution, the duke and Dauphin were to swear a solemn oath in the presence of persons chosen by each the other, to behave kindly and honour-

At three o'clock on the 10th of September, the Duke of Burgundy arrived, on horseback, at the bridge ; and found the Dauphin and his knights already within the barriers, and Du Chatel waiting at the wicket to receive him. " This is the man I trust to," said the duke, putting his hand on Du Chatel's shoulder, as he passed through the barrier, and allowed himself to be carried so quickly into the wooden apartment, without allowing a number of his attendants, but gave time to get through the wicket after him, when Du Chatel struck him to the ground as he was paying obedience to the Dauphin. In a moment the duke was completed by others. One of his knights was stabbed, and another grievously wounded ; the third rushed back through the wicket, with his companions to a castle hard by. This was the assassin of his kinsman *, after long

* See page 411.

impunity, given up to be assassinated by a kinsman. The crime was frightful; but He who had permitted the duke to be ensnared unto his death, was most just. For many murders had filled up the measure of this man's iniquity; and on the other hand, his murder was made to bring speedy retribution upon the perpetrators. It might have been expected, that the queen would have desired to believe her only son less guilty than he appeared; that she would have wished to persuade both herself and others, that so mere a boy must have been ignorant of the intentions of the Armagnacs around him, those ancient dependants of the Orleans family, who, whilst affecting to honour him, had used his name and his person to procure them an opportunity of satisfying their long delayed thirst for revenge. But Isabel was a peculiarly selfish person. She and the Parisians had joined in driving the Armagnacs from power, to bring in the Burgundian; and what they now saw of the implacable disposition of Tanneui Du Chatel, made them terrified at the prospect of his becoming powerful enough to punish that massacre of his friend which they had perpetrated, and her conduct had sanctioned. Hence she now united with the Parisians in raising such a cry of horror at the assassination of the duke, as the hatred of sin could never have drawn forth from persons, who had sought the friendship of that murderer. This abhorrence was to serve them as an excuse for calling in the aid of a foreign enemy to dispossess the Dauphin of his inheritance, and transfer it to the queen's favourite daughter Catherine. It was not unnatural that the son of the late duke should be led, by his indignation, to join heartily in such a project; and as lord of the wealthy provinces of Burgundy, Franche Comté, and Flanders, his power was much greater than that of any other French subject. Within eleven weeks therefore of Tanneui du Chatel's commission of the crime, which

was to have made way for his own party's recovering their paramount influence in the state, the name of Charles VI. had been affixed to the preliminaries of a treaty which united the arms of England and France against them, as men cut off from their country. Dec. 24.

It required five months to complete the negotiations, by which so many and such opposite interests were to be arranged. In this interval, the terms were communicated to the parliament and corporation of Paris, to its university, and the officers of state; whilst the French court continued at Troyes, where it was joined by Henry V., on the 20th of May; bringing in his train an army of 17,000 men. That day he was betrothed to the princess Catherine; and on the following, he and the imbecile king of France publicly signed the celebrated treaty of Troyes; by which Henry engaged to allow Charles VI. a sufficient revenue for the maintenance of the kingly title during his life. After that the crown of France was to pass for ever to Henry and his heirs. Till then, the English king was to content himself with the style of regent, and heir of France; but was to have the government of the kingdom, in consideration of his father-in-law's infirmities; and was to reduce to obedience all the towns and provinces still adhering to the party of Charles, the younger, "calling himself the Dauphin;" with whom none of the contracting parties were to enter into any treaty, unless by advice of the estates of the realm, "because of the horrible and enormous crimes by him committed." Some months later, the "three estates of the realm of France," that is to say, the representatives of the clergy, the nobles, and the commons, were assembled at Paris; and Charles VI. being well enough to conduct himself with propriety, addressed them on the duty of sanctioning this treaty, to which they accordingly gave their formal assent. May 21,
1420.

Dec. 10.

Still the authority of the king of England was not very much extended to the south of Paris, by these acts of a weak government. Within two days after his marriage he had quitted Troyes with his bride, to superintend the siege of Sens; whither he was followed by Isabella and Charles VI. For the latter, even when sane, had not strength of character to resist the degradation of being exhibited in arms against subjects more faithful to his family than he himself was; who were combating to preserve a noble kingdom for his only son. Sens was taken, and Montereau. But the royal arms made little more progress this year. The following, Henry returned to England, to obtain fresh supplies of men and money. This might have served to convince his English subjects, how foolish had been their encouragement of his ambition. It does appear that some were awakened from their dreams of national glory, by their experience of the cost of his past campaigns. They perceived that the war was likely to continue yet for several years; that, if successful, its effect could but make England one of the provinces of a too powerful monarch, who would certainly reside in France; where the English nobles who should visit his court, would find themselves but unimportant personages, by the side of a duke of Burgundy, or of Bretagne. The king of England had, hitherto, not lost a battle; but victories are not purchased without some loss of lives; and the English gentlemen, who had perished in sieges, and numerous engagements of little note, were already so many as to be sensibly missed in a country which the pestilence and civil strife of the last reign had previously much depopulated. This is expressly asserted, in the preamble of an act now passed, as the reason for authorising the king to continue sheriffs, and other annual county officers, in their posts, after the expiration of their year. A petition was also presented to parliament, full of

complaints of the people's poverty, and of the burdens imposed on them through the war. Yet the majority in the house of commons voted the king another fifteenth; and the clergy gave him a tenth*.

This point being carried, the king was indulging his love of worldly honours, in making a triumphant progress through the country; and thereby obliging his nobles and merchants to treat their young queen with processions and gaudy shows, when he received intelligence, at Beverly, that the duke of Clarence, his deputy in France, had been defeated and slain. The news must have been more mortifying to him, as he could not help perceiving, that his own unprincipled behaviour, to a much injured prince, had brought this first reverse upon his arms. For he had continued to detain, as a prisoner, that king of Scotland whom Henry IV. had caused to be arrested, when wrecked as a youth on the English coast. The injustice of this had so irritated the Scotch nobles, that numbers of them had carried their clansmen into France, with king James's cousin, the earl of Buchan, at their head, to serve the Dauphin. It was by the help of 6000 Scotch, furious against the oppressor of their sovereign, that the Dauphin's general, the Sieur de la Fayette, gained this victory over the English army, at Beaujè, in Anjou; which province they were Mar. 22,
1421. wantonly laying waste. The duke of Clarence, who had made himself distinguishable by wearing a ducal coronet of gold and jewels above his

* During the late low condition of the popes, from the effect of the schism, the parliamentary statutes, forbidding them to give away English benefices, (see p. 225, 258, 355.) had been generally enforced. But patrons had abused their recovered rights; bestowing all valuable preferment on their own kinsfolk, and dependents. A petition was therefore presented by the universities, for some remedy to this evil; and it was in consequence enacted, that every prelate, and monastery, should be obliged for the next ten years to bestow every second benefice on *some graduated member of Oxford or Cambridge.*

helmet, was slain with a battle-axe by the earl of Buchan. With him fell the lords Camois and Roos, and 2000 English; whilst 300 were taken prisoners.

To get rid of these new enemies, Henry, on his return to France, carried king James with him; hoping that the Scotch might be induced to come over to his camp, and join their king; to whom he promised, that he should be allowed to revisit his native land, at the close of the campaign. The king of England also took over a reinforcement of 4000 men-at-arms, and 24,000 archers. But still the siege of a single city, Meaux, again employed his army for five months; and formed the only important conquest, made by him in the course of a year.

May 10,
1422. The capture of Meaux was felt as a substantial benefit by the country around; for

its governor had been a monster of cruelty; And Henry only satisfied their cries for vengeance, when he ordered the man to be hung on a large elm, whose branches the unhappy sinner had been used to load with countrymen or travellers; whom he first robbed, and then murdered and hung upon this tree. Yet when the king condemned this cruel governor, he ought to have reflected on the judgment which might be passed on his own conduct by *the King of kings*. For he was guilty, at this very time, of bidding his captains hang every Scotchman who should fall into their hands, as a traitor to king James. Though he could not but be conscious, that his enemies, of that nation, were not in arms to combat their injured king; but to revenge his wrongs.

In the mean while Henry had the gratification of hearing that queen Catharine had been safely delivered, at Windsor, of a son; who, uniting the royal blood of England and France, might dispose the French to submit more readily to his father's sword; as only employed in winning the crown for a prince of their own race.

But now, when king Henry's prospect of success

seemed surest to politicians ; when Paris gazed upon the splendour of his court ; and the king and queen of France did but fill a place in his retinue ; when the persecuted followers of those holy men whom he had given up to the flames in England, and the widows and orphans of the victims of his unjust attempt on France, might have been tempted to exclaim, *Is there knowledge in the most high? behold these are the ungodly ; they prosper in the world**. At such a moment it pleased God to cast him down. A rapid disease stopped him in his march towards the Loire. He was carried to the castle of Vincennes ; and having little more than time to summon his brothers of Bedford and Gloucester to his bedside, to recommend his wife and son to their care, and advise them to cultivate the friendship of the duke of Burgundy, he drew from his physicians an unwilling avowal, that they feared he had but two hours more to live. Aug. 31.
1422. Under this sentence he gave himself up to his confessor's charge ; and the priests about his bed began to chaunt, what are called the seven penitential psalms. When the king heard the words, *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem †*, he raised his voice to say, that it had been his intention to visit Palestine, after finishing his wars in France ; and to set Jerusalem free, by conquering the Saracens. To such a miserable refuge was this poor king driven, in that hour when the terrified soul needs support. It seems, he thought himself entitled to say, that he had intended, at some distant time, to do that which sounded like the fulfilling of the letter of the Psalmist's desire. But as to the spirit of David's wish, the edifying of the spiritual church of God, he had slain those who would have done so. Alas ! *the letter killeth*, when so fatally misunderstood ; it is *the spirit that giveth life ‡*. A

* *Psa. lxxiii. 12.*† *Psa. li. 18.*‡ *2 Cor. iii. 6.*

brief hour more, and his soul stood before that God, who ordaineth *rulers, not to be a terror to good works, but to the evil**; and in whose sight he had been strong to do evil, and terrible to the good.

CHAPTER III.

Henry VI.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperors of Germany.</i>		<i>Kings of Scotland.</i>	
	A.D.		A.D.
Sigismund.		James I.	
Albert II.	1438	James II.	1437
Frederic III.	1440	James III.	1460
<i>Kings of France.</i>		<i>Greek Emperors.</i>	
Charles VI.		John VI.	
Henry VI. of England	1422	Constantine	1445
Charles VII.	1429	Greek empire ends ...	1453

Popes.

Rivals; each acknowledged for the true, by different European nations.

Martin V. ...		Benedict XIII.	
Eugenius IV. ...	1431	Clement VIII. ...	1423—1429
Nicolas V. ...	1447		
Calixtus III. ...	1455		
Pius II. ...	1458		
		Felix V. ...	1439—1449

THE late king had left an only son, of his own name, an infant of but nine months old. And, as if it were not strange enough that one powerful kingdom, and its warlike nobles, should bow to the

authority of a child: the death of Charles VI., which followed in a few weeks, gave him a right, by the treaty of Troyes, to inherit the crown of France also. As soon, therefore, as the officers of Charles's household had broken their staves over his grave, in token that their employments were at an end, a French herald declared Henry VI. his successor, proclaiming aloud that the unconscious babe in its cradle was "sovereign lord of the kingdoms of France and England." As, however, the Dauphin had been no party to the treaty which transferred his inheritance to others, he also began from henceforward to style himself King of France, by the name of Charles VII., and was acknowledged as such in all its south-western provinces, excepting Gascony.

The English party offered the duke of Burgundy the government of France during their king's minority, in order to fix him in their interests; but, on his declining it, the regency was given to the duke of Bedford, Henry the Fifth's eldest surviving brother, who presently married the sister of the Burgundian, to cement their friendship, and also obtained promises of hearty support from the duke of Bretagne. These were the two greatest subjects of France. The duke of Orleans, who was the first prince of the royal blood, refused to sanction the disinheriting of his cousin, the Dauphin: but this duke was still a captive in the Tower.

In the mean while England seemed already to be regarded as no better than a younger brother's portion. The duke of Bedford left it entirely to the management of the duke of Gloucester, to whom, however, Parliament refused the title of Regent, allowing him only that of Protector, which they plainly told him was to be understood as implying the duty of particular attention to protecting the country from either domestic or foreign enemies; and not as importing that he was to have the au-

thority of a governor, which it was their resolution to reserve for the duke of Bedford. The Parliament farther appointed a council of nobles and prelates, comprehending the chief officers of state, who were to have power to act as a king would. Of this council the duke of Gloucester was to be president; but still only as his brother's deputy. This unwillingness to trust the duke of Gloucester with any considerable portion of kingly power was chiefly owing to the arts of his uncle, Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, who thought that if he could prevent the law from giving the duke a very decided superiority, his own more staid manners, and the vast wealth he had accumulated, would oblige a man of such dissolute habits, as the duke was unhappily notorious for, to leave the government of the country actually, if not nominally, in his hands. The times were peculiarly favourable to a churchman's ambition; for the wars keeping many of the English nobles employed in France, but twenty-two lay peers received summonses to attend a parliament held in the second year of this reign; so that the bishops and abbots could out-vote the other members of the House of Lords by a majority of two to one.

The first event of any importance in the French war during the duke of Bedford's regency was an engagement near Crevant, in Burgundy, which the Dauphin's troops, under the earl of Buchan, were besieging, when attacked by the earl of Salisbury at the head of 4,000 English and Burgundians. The struggle was a fierce one; but the English were victorious, slaying such a number of their adversaries as equalled the whole amount of their own army, and taking prisoners the earl of Buchan and 400 gentlemen. Yet the victors found that they had also lost 1600 men. The heaviest loss, however, was that of the Scotch; of whom 3000 were slain, their zeal having led

July,
1423.

them to place themselves in the fore-front of the battle.

Charles VII. took prudent pains to secure the attachment of a people willing to fight so bravely in his cause. He had made the earl of Buchan, Grand Constable of France; and he now speedily paid the money demanded for the earl's ransom. To another Stuart, lord Darnley, he gave the lordship of Aubigny in Berry; whilst the earl of Douglas, who reached Rochelle with a reinforcement of 5000 Scotch, received for his reward the princely dukedom of Touraine. Nor did he only bestow his favours on their chieftains. The Scotch nation was gratified by his selecting their countrymen to form his body-guard; and the honours and emoluments attending military service about the French sovereign's person have, in consequence, belonged to a Scotch corps from that period to very recent times.

On the other hand, the importance of depriving their French adversary of such zealous allies made the English government sensible that it would be its best policy to ill-treat the Scotch king no longer. It was, therefore, determined to allow James that liberty which Henry V. had promised him. He was accordingly permitted to return home, and to take upon him the government of his kingdom; after engaging to pay 80,000*l.* for the expences of his maintenance during his detention of nineteen years in England, as they were ashamed to call it his ransom; and also pledging himself, which a wise sovereign might well do, to order that no more of his subjects should quit their native country to fight the battles of a foreign prince. It was farther desired that he should take an English lady to become his queen; and he accordingly married Jane Beaufort, a grand-daughter of John of Gaunt. In return for which satisfactory choice the English council, to have the air of doing a generous thing, remitted that portion of their demand upon him

April,
1424.

which he had promised to pay as his last instalment at the end of six years from his liberation, being about 12,000*l*.

As king James and the English Protector were equally aware that it might not be in the power of the former to oblige the Scotch already in Charles's service to quit it, they were expressly exempted from the necessity of conforming to the seven years' truce now agreed upon between England and Scotland. A few months later these staunch supporters of Charles VII. were almost all cut to pieces in a great battle fought near Verneuil in Normandy, in which the duke of Bedford, with 10,000 men, defeated 18,000 French, Lombards, and Scotch, slaying 8,000 of his adversaries, whilst the only prisoners they are stated to have taken were the duke of Alençon and 200 gentlemen. For in these battles no mercy was shewn; save to such as were likely to be redeemed with money. The earl of Buchan and the duke of Touraine were amongst those who perished.

If some angelic being, unacquainted with our nature, had alighted on the field of Verneuil, whilst the 10,000 gashed and bloody corpses of those who fell on both sides, lay still unburied on the ground, would he have thought it possible that this hideous mangling of so many ghastly forms could have been done by their fellow-creatures; by beings acknowledging that Creator, whose exquisite workmanship they had thus ruined and defiled? Would he have conceived it possible, that men should honour successful ambition; when it has-risen to power by needlessly urging mankind to such carnage of their brethren? Would his knowledge of the long suffering of God be sufficient to enable him to comprehend His still shewing mercy to such a race; especially if informed that God had said to them of old, *thou shalt do no murder*; and had especially bidden each to love the other as himself? Yet the destruction of

life, in battles and in sieges, was but a small part of the evil which Henry the fifth's ambition had entailed upon the kingdom he coveted. Whoever could procure arms thought himself obliged, in self-defence, to turn soldier; and whoever became a soldier, became a robber. So that the word *peelers* grew into a common name for men-at-arms; because they stripped the defenceless population even of their shirts. If the common people resisted, or even if they resisted not, when caprice dictated cruelty, they were murdered, and trodden underfoot; so that, through their terror, fields lay untilled, and few went to plough. So hardened were the hearts of the combatants by the sight of continued acts of violence, that John of Luxemburgh, a distinguished noble on the Burgundian side, having brought home prisoners to his castle, is mentioned as calling out his young nephew, the count of St. Pol, to kill some of them, that he might learn the ways of war; a request which, the narrator tells us, this boy took much pleasure in complying with. And it must be observed, that the tale does not come from an enemy, wishing to have his foe known for a monster of cruelty, but is told by one too blind to see any wickedness in the fact.

Charles VII. whose anxiety to secure his own rights, would naturally have urged him to protect France from being the prey of hostile combatants, was now weakened to such a degree, and so seldom ventured beyond a small distance in Berry, as to have the name of "king of Bourges," bestowed upon him in derision. But the cries of the oppressed people, though directed more frequently to the departed saints whom they so ignorantly worshipped, than to the God of heaven and earth, were heard by Him who had long poured out His just wrath upon them. He was already preparing the way for their deliverance, by suffering the seeds of dissention to be sown among their enemies;

and by raising up a remarkable instrument to encourage the dispirited defenders of the French monarchy.

Jaqueline, daughter of the earl of Hainault, inherited the sovereignty of Holland, Hainault and two other provinces. This great heiress, being too proud to become an obedient wife, deserted her husband the duke of Brabant, and escaped to England; where the duke of Gloucester persuaded her to apply for a divorce, and to marry him. As even distant relationship gave the Romish church a pretext for such sentences *, the council of Constance served her purpose, by declaring, that her marriage, with the duke of Brabant, had not been a lawful one; and she accordingly became the wife of the duke of Gloucester, who next claimed possession of her princely inheritance. On this the duke of Brabant appealed to his powerful cousin, the duke of Burgundy, for protection; who, in consequence, requested the regent, Bedford, not to let his kinsman be farther injured by the person who had already deprived him of a wife. The regent was too well aware, that the support of the duke of Burgundy was the strength of the English party, not to pay attention to his wishes. But it was in vain that he desired his brother to withdraw his claim; and reminded him of Henry the fifth's dying request, that they would carefully preserve the duke's good will. Gloucester

Decem.
1424. landed at Calais with 5000 Englishmen, and marched into Flanders to seize upon Hainault; but was quickly opposed there by troops, which the duke of Burgundy withdrew from the allied army, intended to pursue the war against Charles VII. The dispute soon became personal; insulting letters passed; and Burgundy challenging Gloucester to single combat, the latter accepted his

* See Vol. I. page 201.

challenge; and leaving the duchess Jaqueline in her late father's town of Mons, returned to England; to make some preparations for the combat, which was to be formally fought at Paris, in the regent's presence. But he had not been long gone, when the people of Hainault recalled the officers of the duke of Brabant; and gave up Jaqueline into the custody of the Burgundians; to be kept at Ghent till the Pope should decide on the validity of her marriages. From Ghent, however, she contrived to escape; riding out of the city gates, at dusk, disguised in male attire, and reaching the borders of Holland, whose inhabitants received and promised to protect her. Thither the duke of Gloucester sent five hundred men-at-arms, to form her body guard. For this he was sternly reprimanded by his colleagues in the English council; who perceived how injurious his selfish ambition must be, to what they regarded as the national interest. Indeed, even the populace observed, that it was not out of affection for his wife, that he was willing to engage the country in a fresh war; as he was now openly attaching himself to lady Eleanor Cobham*, a person of very ill reputation. By this time too, the Pope had pronounced Jaqueline's former marriage valid; had forbidden the projected duel; and had enjoined all Christian princes to prevent its taking effect within their territories; whilst the regent declared himself resolved to obey this injunction.

Sept. 1,
1425.

In the midst of these angry discussions, the duke of Brabant died. On which Jaqueline married a private Burgundian gentleman; and the duke of Gloucester disgraced himself by an union with lady Eleanor. Henceforward the duke of Burgundy was no longer the staunch friend of the English.

* Daughter, and heiress, of a relation of the martyr; to whom that good man's title had passed, after his condemnation.

The notorious misconduct and indiscretion of the duke of Gloucester, throughout the whole of this affair, encouraged bishop Beaufort to think, that the English nation would now bear with him, perhaps might assist him, in depriving this duke of the little superiority attached to the title of protector. They first came to an open dispute, about having the management of the young king's person; and, from angry words the bishop was the first to go on to deeds of violence. The protector was in London, when he received such information as made him send for the mayor; and bid him see that the approaches to the city were carefully guarded that night. Early the next morning, a troop of the bishop's followers appeared at the gate on London bridge; but were refused admittance; and repulsed in their attempt to break through. On this they declared, that if their lord's servants might not enter the city, the protector should not leave it; which they knew he was about to do, on a visit to the king at Eltham. And, accordingly, they barricadoed the road, and placed archers in the houses on each side. It was with great difficulty that the archbishop of Canterbury, and a Portuguese prince, prevented bloodshed, by riding to and fro between the angry heads of the contending parties. But a few days after this, the bishop wrote the regent Bedford a letter, requesting his return with speed to England, if he wished to prevent him and Gloucester from hazarding every thing on a pitched battle; which this professed servant of *the Prince of peace* was not ashamed to confess, might otherwise be expected from their uncontrouled passions.

The regent attended to the call, and seemed disposed to think his brother more wrong than his uncle. But he summoned a parliament to settle their disputes; and the duke of Gloucester laid before it a regular charge, accusing bishop Beaufort of having intended to kill him.

The friends of each had come thither so irritated, that, whereas the regent had expressly forbidden the members to wear their swords, they and their servants appeared armed with heavy sticks; from whence this was surnamed the parliament of batts. Yet the prudence of the regent prevented the evil that was in men's hearts from breaking out into crimes of violence. The bishop was acquitted. He and the duke of Gloucester were requested by the lords, and consented, to shake hands in public; and the regent made a feast to celebrate their reconciliation. Yet he thought it prudent to deprive him of the important office of chancellor; and the mortified prelate requested permission to leave England on a pilgrimage. But when worldly statesmen had become convinced, that bishop Beaufort was unfit to be trusted with that authority for which his love of money and of power made him, even in their sight, too eager, the pope, having had ample time to hear of what had passed in England, conferred on him the rank of Cardinal; which was regarded in the Romish church as equivalent to appointing him a representative of the Apostles, in the government of Christ's flock.

These disputes among the great had so unsettled the English administration, that the regent thought it best to abstain from asking for any further supplies, though the war in France almost slept, for want of more money and fresh troops. They had also detained him so long out of France, that the duke of Bretagne had, in the mean while, been persuaded to separate his troops from the English, and even to overlook his younger brother's raising recruits against them. Hence the first employment of the regent, on his recrossing the channel, was, to lead his forces into Bretagne, and make war upon its duke; till he had compelled him to swear fidelity to the English king.

All these things were favourable to the dauphin;

the strongest place upon the river Loire, the boundary for some hundred miles between the province subject to Henry and to the dauphin ; and also its being on the high-road from Paris to Bourges which crossed the Loire at the bridge of Chinon. Hence the two parties prepared for the siege and defence of this city, as for a contest which would decide whether Charles should preserve any of his paternal dominions. A reinforcement of men under Montague, earl of Salisbury, had strengthened the English army ; and he took the command of the besieging force. Before his approach the bravest of Charles's officers had entered Chinon, and other towns of France had contributed, in money and provisions for the use of its inhabitants, who themselves destroyed the suburb on the left bank of the river, that they might have fewer quarters to defend.

On the 24th of October, 1428, the earl of Salisbury entrenched himself in the ruins of Chinon to cut off the communication between Orleans and the French king ; and his next step was to take the Tournelle, a fortified tower built upon

t the Tournelle was on the eve of being set fire to it, and withdrew to a similar position in the meanwhile, nearer the city end of the Tournelle. After which they broke up one of the batteries between the Tournelle and their new position. The besieged had thus lost one of their bulwarks, and the English army had suffered much in effecting this; and the Orleanese were soon after cheered by the arrival in the city, of the brave Dunois, with an reinforcement of 800 soldiers. Soon after the Earl of Salisbury, having looked out of a window of the Tournelle to observe the French, was drawing back his head, had his eye put out and his cheek broken, by a fragment of an iron cannon-ball which had struck the farther end of the window and flown in pieces. It was his death; and the command-in-chief devolved on Sir John Suffolk, a less able general.

The siege went on for several months without any considerable loss on the side of the garrison. Though an army collected for its relief was destroyed in an attack on Sir John Falstaff, a very inferior force, was conveying a supply of provisions to the English camp. Many of the English got into the city, but they only dispirited the Orleanese, who were soon after deserted by the Duke of Burgundy, and by such troops as were attached to him; whilst the besiegers increased to 100,000 and gradually built a chain of small forts round the city, to watch every approach. The Duke of Burgundy, had now no farther means of assisting the Orleanese; and so little hope of stopping the progress of the English, when it should fall, that he consulted with some of his most trusted friends, and concluded it would be wisest for him to seek shelter in France, or in Spain.

At this crisis, that it pleased the great Disposer of all events, to raise up one of those seemingly trifling *instruments*, whose very weakness proves

the strength of that Almighty arm that wields them; when they are seen to stop the course of conquerors, and make vain the wisdom of statesmen, till kings and people are compelled to remember that *the Lord, He is the God, even He alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth* *.

When the Dauphin and his counsellors were equally driven to despair, and the English thought only of dividing the spoil, a peasant girl was chosen to execute the purposes of divine mercy, being enabled to rescue the remainder of France from foreign plunderers; to pave the way for uniting that long divided country into one powerful monarchy; and, in reality, to save England from falling into the rank of a subject province, under Plantagenet kings reigning at Paris.

The liberality with which modern governments allow their records to be searched for the discovery of truth, enables us to learn more than used to be known of the real character of this girl. Joan of Arc was born in the hamlet of Domremy, near Vancouleurs, in Champagne: her parents occupied a small farm there, and were respected by the neighbours as simple, honest, kindly people. They brought her up according to their own way of life, to tend sheep, to hoe the ground, to sew, and to spin; and though she never learnt either to read or to write, her mother taught her to say the Lord's prayer and the creed in Latin. They could be only unmeaning sounds in the mouth of either; but their priests bade them think it prayer, to repeat their forms, and therefore they did it. Wherever the Romish Church was thus implicitly obeyed, the religion of the people contained the same mixture of truth and idolatry as prevailed amongst that confused population of heathens and Israelites of whom the Scripture says, *These nations feared the Lord*,

*served their graven images**. Hence Joan was not to pray to the Virgin Mary, as even more pious than Him who left the glory of Heaven to her. And the girl's inclination to early piety, unhappily misled, made her a frequent worshipper of an image of the Virgin which stood in a chapel near the fields where she kept her father's sheep: but as this defect in her religion did not appear amiss to those suffering under the blindness, an Englishman, sent afterwards to the native hamlet to learn all the ill that might befall her, reported to his employers that he had found nothing but what he would gladly hear of his sister. The parish priest said there was no one in the place like her for attention to all the duties prescribed by his church. And the beadle remembered her promising him a little present if he should be more regular than he sometimes was, in ringing a bell which summoned the devout to fall on their knees, whether they heard it in the house or in the field. With an affectionate disposition, and a warm imagination, of that pensive cast which often suffered her to join in the merry dances of the village, and often drew her into the house of the pinner, Joan brooded over the eager discussions of sorrowful tales she heard among the peasants about the calamities of their country, and the disasters of its native prince; himself a youth of little more than her own age. It was part of her mistaken notion that departed saints were employed in watching over the kingdoms of the earth; and the conviction that they must desire to help the land in which they were especially honoured took such hold of her mind, that her excited feelings, being gradually brought to a feverish height, at length produced a kind of insanity which disables persons from distinguishing between past thoughts and realities.

* 2 Kings xvii. 41.

that have been seen or heard. Under this disorder, though of a sound mind in other respects, she began to believe that she had seen female figures in the air, having crowns on their heads, and that she had more frequently heard their voices; that they had told her their names were St. Margaret and Catharine, and that they repeatedly bade her to go and assist Charles, the Dauphin. Being filled with these impressions, it was natural that she should consider who could have influence enough to procure her access to him. And from dwelling on this thought, and regarding the lord of her own and the adjacent villages as a person who must be known at court, her delusion led her to fancy, as might be expected, that the voices directed her to require the aid of the Sieur Baudricourt, the lord of Vaucouleurs.

Joan was now about eighteen years of age, and her parents seem to have perceived and feared that she was becoming unsettled in her thoughts: then

1428. father, in consequence, threatened her with severe treatment if she should quit her home; but she prevailed upon an uncle to ask leave for her to visit him, and he was further persuaded to conduct her into Baudricourt's presence. To him she then said, that she had an order from heaven to go and make the Dauphin king of France. Such a tale only drew forth this gentleman's ridicule; and he coarsely desired her uncle to chastise her, and send her back to her father; as an idle girl who wished to turn vagabond.

Among the thousand old sayings which are taken over by country people as prophecies, in seasons of calamity, and forgotten when they come to nothing, there was one, that a virgin should appear to save the country from ruin: a notion likely enough to be floating about in the minds of a people devoted to the worship of the Virgin Mary. This saying had been heard by Joan, and had probably contributed

turn of her delusion. And now it was repeated by others when her wild fancy began to dwell of, and the neighbours thought that surely no mortal or angel had in truth spoken to the girl, they believed too good to tell a falsehood; and recalled the imagined prophecy they altered in their talk, till it answered more and more to the verities of her case. In this shape their conversation reached Baudricourt's ears; and he, influenced by him with somewhat of their own credulity, he therefore took his parish priest to visit her; and the reports spread wider, till they reached the Dauphin, less afraid of being laughed at than he. The Dauphin, John de Metz, undertook to escort her to Chinon; and then Baudricourt gave her a sword and a horse, and a suit of male attire was provided for her, as about to become a soldier; and the whole neighbourhood crowded with earnest good-will, surrounded the little party of seven armed men, to make their way with her through a long and fifty miles of hostile territory, before they could reach the districts subject to the Dau-

phin. One of the escort was her own brother: two were soldiers, who thought she was either a witch, and expected that their employers would leave her in some prison by the way. John de Metz, and a friend of his who had seen her at Baudricourt's, had many doubts whether they should expose themselves to unbearable ridicule for following her to her confident language about her future.

But, as they travelled on, all were alike drawn to esteem her by the simple modesty which accompanied the firmness of her resolutions, by the earnestness and frequency of her prayers, and by her plain manner in speaking of the love of God.

On, on the eleventh day from their departure, they arrived safe at Chinon, to find that the Dauphin had retreated from

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Bourges. His counsellors were immediately informed of her arrival and pretensions, but as the fear of witchcraft was very prevalent, they were most of them against her being admitted into his presence. There were, however, some statesmen in the Dauphin's council who thought that the spirits of the people might be raised by the hope of supernatural help; and they accordingly devised various expedients to make her be thought an especial favourite of heaven, endowed with miraculous knowledge of hidden things. By their advice Charles was induced to order a number of divines to meet and call her before them; that after questioning her they might decide upon the lawfulness of using her assistance in the war. To one of this assembly, who observed, that if God indeed intended to deliver France He did not need men-at-arms to fight, she replied, in the words of sober piety, "Men-at-arms fight; and God gives the victory." The report of the divines was favourable; and, after hearing it, Charles had a suit of armour made for her use, and ordered that all her wishes should be respected.

As she was of a strong make, and well proportioned in her person, and accustomed to riding horses to water or a-field, she could manage her steed, and poise her light lance, with an address which the crowd thought miraculous. For her banner, she desired the heralds to paint a figure of our Saviour seated on the clouds, and to write under it *Jesus Maria*; little knowing how unfit it was to place the name of the most favoured of human creatures on a level, in honour, with that which God hath declared to be *above every name*, commanding *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth* *. This banner Joan carried herself whenever she could. At other times it was borne by D'Aulon, a man

* Phil. ii. 9, 10.

selected for his known bravery, to be her constant attendant in battle. She declared, she loved her banner forty times more than her sword ; which she said, “ I do not mean to use to kill any one.”

The notice thus taken of her by the great, quickly spread the belief of her having supernatural aid at her call ; and the people volunteered, in numbers, to act under her command. Whilst some even sought their way, in small bodies, into Orleans ; no longer despairing for the safety of a city, which she publicly declared herself commanded from heaven to rescue.

On the 25th of April, Joan was at Blois, with 7000 men under marshal St. Sever. Before quitting that place, she desired that the soldiers would leave there the women and baggage ; that they would confess their sins, and put their trust in God, as He intended to give them victory. A Latin hymn was then sung ; and the troops began their march, with priests chaunting at their head. She had sent before her a letter to the earl of Suffolk and the other English commanders, ordering them to go home to their own country, if they would not be driven out of France, or slain.

As the English had now placed their main army on the north bank of the Loire, being on the same side with the cities, both of Orleans and of Blois ; marshal St. Sever judged it best, that the French should proceed through the country on the south of the river ; and cross it opposite to Orleans, in the vessels of a little fleet which was working up the stream, laden with supplies for the besieged. But Joan, who knew no fear, desired that they might march to Orleans through the enemy's lines. The marshal professed intending to comply with her wish, but he told his officers to take the other road. It so happened, however, that a strong easterly wind made it impossible for the vessels to ascend the river. Hence the marshal, after having led his troops opposite Orleans, and communicated with Dunois, who

still commanded there, was obliged to retrace his steps to Blois; that he might take the very course which the maid had recommended. This disposed every soldier to believe that her judgment would be found to be infallible.

The counter-march gave time for a change of wind. As the French army advanced up the northern bank, the vessels were getting ahead of their march, when Joan and a few others went on board; and, disembarking again at sunset, about six miles below Orleans, their small party rode unnoticed between the Eng-

lish forts; and reached the city gate. They were most joyfully admitted. Her arrival was proclaimed with shouts; and the inhabitants, coming out with torches, gazed on her with wonder, as she passed along their streets in armour, mounted on a white horse; and having her banner spread. Her first visit was to the church; and, her prayers being said, she answered the applause of the people with gentle exhortations to confidence and hope. At the house of the treasurer of the city, a feast was provided for her supper; but she only partook of a little bread, soaked in wine; and then retired to rest, with the daughter of her host.

The next day St. Sever and his army appeared; and Dunois and Joan went out of the gates, to let the English see they could not march against him, without exposing themselves to an attack from the city on their rear. But the chaunting of the priests, still in front of St. Sever's line, on the one side, and the sight of the warlike witch, as they thought her, on the other, perplexed the English with unknown fears. Their officers insulted the maid with coarse and profligate language; but none had the courage to quit their entrenchments; and St. Sever marched unopposed into the city, whilst the provision vessels unloaded at the gates opening on the river.

In the dead of the following night Joan awakened with a shriek; and, exclaiming, "the blood of our

trymen is running on the ground," she called for her armour and her horse. Either that keenness of the animal senses which often accompanies insanity, had made her ears sensible of sounds heard by those around her; or, as one used to be in the stillness of the country, she was more disturbed by a distant noise than the townspeople. D'Aulon obeyed her call; and, hastily going, they moved in the direction in which the roar of combatants was now distinctly heard. A party of French had sallied out, unknown to Dunois, and stormed the nearest fort. But the English, quitting it, had returned again; recovered their ground; and pursued their opponents to the city gate. They found them fighting there; and a wounded man being carried past her, she shrunk back, saying, "I had never seen a Frenchman's blood without shuddering." A moment more, and she rushed on, her banner in her hand, towards the contested

The French rallied again. The city bells were sounding an alarm. Dunois, on the one side, Talbot, on the other, brought fresh troops to the aid of the combatants. The struggle continued four hours; but, before the day closed, the fort was taken by the French; pulled to pieces; and levelled with the ground.

His first success led to more; by raising the courage of the French, and depressing that of the English. Several advantages were gained in sallies; in which Joan led the way, and was followed by the English, in despite of remonstrances from experienced officers, who thought them far too rash. On the other hand it was to little purpose that the English commanders assured their men, that Joan, instead of being aided by saints and angels, was a woman in league with Beelzebub. It was not understood, in that age, that the witches spoken of in scripture were deceivers, pretending to powers which they by no means really possessed. Every

one thought them to have been persons who gave up their souls to the devil, on condition of his being a sort of slave to them, while they lived ; and of his working whatsoever miracles they chose to bid him. Hence the English imagined that a blow, aimed at Joan of Arc, would recoil on the striker. Yet an arrow pierced her in the neck, as she was leading an attack against one of the outworks to the Tournelle. But even then, as soon as D'Aulon perceived that she was not very dangerously wounded, he carried her banner forward to the rampart ; and the French followed him with such fury as the English were unable to resist. Lord Molyns and Glasdale attempted to retreat ; but the wooden bridge, which connected the outwork with the fortress, was struck by a cannon ball, as they were passing over it ; and these two distinguished officers falling, with several others, into the water below, sunk from the weight of their armour, and were drowned. The Tournelle was, in consequence, deserted by its defenders. And the Earl of Suffolk, perceiving that his troops thought it hopeless to combat longer, and that he had lost nearly 8,000 men in a week, resolved on withdrawing from Orleans. At sun-rise, the next day, May 8. the English were seen striking their tents ; and quitting their remaining forts. The French, therefore, drew out of the city, to watch their movements ; but Joan forbade their attacking the English. She had declined combating on Ascension day. It was now Sunday. " This is the holy sabbath ; " she said, " and if they choose to go away, it is the will of God. Let them depart." She then ordered an altar to be raised, in front of the French line : and desired the priests to chaunt the mass, whilst she herself knelt in prayer. After some time, she asked, " Are the faces of the English still towards us ? " " They are looking towards Maine ; " was the reply. " Then they are retreating," said she. " Let them go ; and let us thank God. We will not

pursue them, as it is Sunday." The populace were now suffered to rush out of the city; and to feast themselves on the provisions, left behind by the English. Whilst some of the soldiers followed the earl of Suffolk, in despite of Joan's orders, and captured several cannon, in his rear.

Thus had the maid of Orleans, as writers have, in consequence, since called her, been the means of delivering that city in eight days; and of undoing all that the English army had effected in as many months. Yet that her own weak arm could not have contributed much to the defeating of Henry the Fifth's veteran warriors, is certain. It was the opinion entertained, of her being supernaturally assisted, which giving the French new courage, and dismaying the English, had so changed the character of the two armies, that henceforward the English fought, in this war, like men who only wanted an excuse to fly the field for safety.

The next great service, which the maid of Orleans earnestly desired to undertake for the Dauphin, was to conduct him in safety to the city of Rheims; that he might be crowned there. For the cathedral of Rheims, the capital of the French province of Champagne was, and still is considered, from some superstition, as the only church in which the coronation of a king of France can be quite duly performed. To Charles himself, the undertaking seemed impracticable; as the place could not be approached without passing Paris, then exceedingly hostile to him; and marching 200 miles through a country possessed, and garrisoned, by his enemies; in the midst of whom, if he should be able to reach Rheims, he must still besiege it, and force his way within its gates, before he could be crowned in its cathedral.

It was now, however, become easy for his friends to raise an army; and the duke of Alençon put himself at its head, with the determination to let the

maid regulate its proceedings. Leading this army on to enterprises which the duke thought beyond its strength, before a month had past she had
 June 12. stormed the town, in which the earl of Suffolk had quartered his forces; and had taken prisoner the earl himself.

After his capture, Lord Talbot took the command of the English; and received from Paris a reinforcement of 4,000 soldiers. He was a man whose courage was that of a lion. But such courage only fitted him for a common soldier; as, though he could use his own brute strength undisturbed by fear, he was incapable of combining events, and providing for difficulties, with the prudence requisite in a general. Hence he obliged his troops to give battle to the duke
 June 18. of Alençon, and the maid, when he ought to have perceived the men had no heart to fight. The consequence was, that he too became a prisoner. Sir John Falstaff had drawn off his men early in this day's fight; for which the regent Bedford deprived him of the order of the Garter: an honour that his prowess had earned for him from Henry V. no ill judge of bravery. And though Sir John afterwards convinced the regent, that the whole army would have been lost, if he had not done so, and was, in consequence, replaced by him on the list of knights, yet his behaviour in the present instance so irritated the nation against him, that all his former bold actions were forgotten; and Shakspeare made a popular use of Falstaff's name, when he covered it with ridicule, as that of a mean and profligate coward *.

* The slanders which the Romish priesthood often degraded themselves by inventing, to blacken the character of those they had persecuted, were never perhaps carried farther than in their attacks on the reputation of Lord Cobham. By the time the calumnies they devised against his memory had been repeated 150 years, they got such credit with those who took no pains to search out the truth, that Shakspeare, whose acquaintance with past events was often taken from idle tales, had learnt from them to believe that that brave, noble-minded, and

In the mean while there was a struggle going on in Bohemia, of far more importance than the wars in France; a part of that warfare, waged by the powers of darkness against the children of light, which the Holy Spirit had shewn, by a figure, to the Apostle John *. The Bohemians, shocked at the treachery and cruelty with which their venerated countrymen, Huss and Jerome of Prague, had been treated by the council of Constance, listened to their surviving disciples with such a disposition to receive their words, that numbers were daily persuaded by them to search the Scriptures. To stifle this infant church, before it should have time to grow stronger, Pope Martin issued a bull, calling on the sovereigns and princes of Europe to lead their armies into Bohemia; that they might extirpate, as heretics, all who should deny that the Bohemian martyrs had been justly condemned to the flames; or who should refuse to "believe and affirm, that it is lawful for faithful Christians to worship images and the relics," that is, the bones "of saints." This papal order turned their neighbours into enemies; but was not much attended to in parts distant from Bohemia, except in England, where Cardinal Beaufort proclaimed his intention of putting himself at the head of a crusade against the Bohemians. It now appears that the pope, on making bishop Beaufort, a cardinal, had conditioned for his using his influence and treasures to persecute the servants of God in Bohemia; and the cardinal so far kept his promise, that he persuaded, or hired, 2,000 archers, and a mixed crowd of 3,000 others to go on the crusade. A reinforcement from the warlike population of England, in addition to

holy martyr was the loose companion of wicked men, and the infamous corruptor of Henry the Fifth's inexperienced years. As such he described him; giving lord Cobham's earlier title, Sir John Oldcastle, to the character he drew. But when the poet had discovered his mistake, he substituted the despised name of Falstaff for that of Oldcastle.

* Rev. xii. and xiii.

the enemies already carrying fire and sword amongst the followers of Jerome and Huss, should have seemed enough to work the pope's cruel purpose; but though *persecuted*, the Bohemians were *not forsaken* *. The Holy Spirit has declared *to them that love God*, and hear His call, that *the world is their own* †; inasmuch as, in His government thereof, He maketh *all things work together for their good* ‡. And they who reflect on this gracious declaration will not be *slow of heart to believe* §, that the many losses which the English suffered in France, at this period were providentially so timed as to become the means of saving the Bohemians from an overwhelming persecution, whilst their intended persecutors found themselves given up to suffer all the evils of a disastrous war.

The defeat of Lord Talbot, and the increasing fear of the maid of Orleans, amongst the English soldiers, made the regent Bedford most anxious to recruit his army; and though cardinal Beaufort may be supposed to have felt some desire to keep his promise with the pope, and some reluctance to acting a treacherous part towards those, whom he had invited to seek for salvation by slaying heretics, the love of lucre was his ruling passion. Hence whilst his crusaders were embarking, the cardinal

July 1. was negotiating at Rochester with the English council to sell their services. The bargain was quickly made. The cardinal received a warrant on the royal treasury for 6000*l.*; and permission to name their commander. And before the crusaders could leave Calais, an order had been signed, in king Henry's name, for authorising the regent to imprison any of them, if they should attempt to pass on into Bohemia, instead of joining his army.

The increase to his number, thus gained, was not sufficient to induce the regent to put himself in the

* 2 Cor. iv. 9. † 1 Cor. iii. 22. ‡ Rom. viii. 28. § Luke xxiv. 25.

way of the Dauphin's progress towards Rheims. Yet as that city had a Burgundian garrison, and was well fortified, the Dauphin was not without his fears, that even if he should reach the place, it would only be to receive a repulse: being unprovided with either cannon, or machines to batter the walls. But his spirited guide Joan knew the feelings of the populace; and she ventured to assure him, that the inhabitants of Rheims would come out, and offer their submission. In their march thither, she led the French to an assault against the city of Troyes; and it surrendered. This encouraged the still hesitating Dauphin to push on with more alacrity; whilst it added so much to the alarm of his enemies, in Rheims, that the Burgundians and their commander withdrew; and, as Joan had foretold, the Dauphin was met by a deputation of the citizens, inviting him to enter their gates.

The next day he was crowned; and Joan had the exceeding delight of embracing her sovereign's knees, as she threw herself at his feet, and hailed him no longer Dauphin, but King of France. July 17. It may be supposed that her happiness, on this occasion, was not a little increased by the circumstance of her father's having joined her, as the army passed through Champagne; and being honoured by a place in the procession, and by having the moderate expence of his preparation for it paid by the city.

The plain sense which directed Joan in most parts of her conduct, where her peculiar delusion did not happen to interfere, made her now express a wish to return home in peace. But the king was loth to part with a person, whose presence gave confidence to his troops. She still, therefore, accompanied the army; and took an active share in every operation. The duke of Bedford had henceforward to guard, instead of extending his conquests; and retired to protect Normandy. Whilst Charles VII.

was acknowledged, and received, as king, in several strong towns north of Paris; and encamping on the adjoining hill of Montmartre, made an unsuccessful attempt to force his way into the capital itself. Sept. 12. Another failure of a similar kind disheartened the maid, whose courage had been kept up at an unnatural height by success. She again mistook the thoughts which had past in her mind for words that had been spoken; and, in consequence, believed herself to have been warned by the voices of spirits, that great calamities would soon befall her.

In the following spring the English council thought fit to have king Henry carried over into France, to be crowned; as a means of counteracting the effect produced upon the French by the coronation of Charles. They wished to have had him also crowned at Rheims; but, being unable to recover that city, the ceremony was performed at Paris. There was assuredly but little wisdom in planning to win the attachment of the French nation to his cause by exhibiting to them a dull boy of nine years old, surrounded by Englishmen; and bidding them bow down before him, as fitter to reign over them than their native prince, who was now at the head of a victorious army. Scarcely however had the young king arrived in Paris, when the most dreaded of his adversaries, the maid of Orleans, fell into the hands of the Burgundians besieging Compiègne. She had entered that town to defend it; and having sallied out, the same afternoon, with 600 men, to attack the works of the besiegers, a reinforcement of English were perceived advancing between her party and the walls of the town. The consequence was a hurried retreat of the French, who were hotly pursued by the Burgundians; and when some had got back within the gates, the drawbridge was hastily pulled up, to prevent the English from entering with the fugitives;

so that Joan was shut out, whilst engaged in checking the pursuers, to protect the flight of her party. On perceiving this, she turned her horse, and attempted to ride round to the opposite gate; whilst the bells of the churches rung an alarm, to summon the bravest of the garrison to rush for her rescue; but a soldier had followed her; and catching hold of the skirt of the velvet robe which the king had given her, to wear over her armour, he ^{May 25,} _{1430.} dragged her to the ground.

The unhappy maid was first delivered up to the custody of John of Luxemburgh, a kinsman to the duke of Burgundy; but the bishop of Beauvais insisted, that since she was taken in his diocese, he had a right to sit in judgment upon her, as suspected of witchcraft. And because the rules of war would have made it dishonourable in her captor to surrender her to be condemned by any court of justice, the bishop devised that money should be paid for her ransom; in order to justify refusing her the privileges of a prisoner of war. Before this was arranged, Joan had been kept four months in the dungeon of Luxemburgh's castle; and had made two desperate attempts to escape from the cruelties, which she foresaw awaited her. She had once reached the battlement of the tower in which she was imprisoned, and leaping from it to the ground was taken up by her guards, nearly lifeless, at the foot of the rampart. After this, she was carried to Rouen; and, in the prison there, her ^{Dec.} feet and legs were fastened by fetters to a strong chain, which crossed the end of her bed; whilst another chain was girt round her body, now emaciated by sickness and misery. And as if this were not enough to secure her, three Englishmen kept guard day and night within the room, and two more without. Their coarse abuse, and gross jests, added to the bitterness of the poor girl's sorrows; and she became so ill, that the earl of Warwick or-

dered physicians to attend her. "The king," said he to them, "has bought her dear; she must die by justice, and be burnt." They found her in a fever; and reported to him that she must be bled. "Beware of that," replied the earl; "she is cunning, and may manage to bleed to death."

At length the bishop of Beauvais, and the pope's inquisitor, had agreed on the form of her trial, and condemnation. They presided; and the selection of the rest of her judges, Englishmen and other enemies of the Dauphin, was as if a band of robbers were to sit in judgment on a servant of the master of the house, for boldly defending his house from their attacks. In the mean while, persons had been sent about to gather evidence of all the evil that could be said of her*. The worst charge was, that she had ordered a Burgundian officer, named Franquet of Arras, to be put to death, after his surrendering to her, in the field of battle. But she answered, that he had confessed himself a robber, and a murderer; and that a magistrate had told her, it would be wrong to let him live. As to her own sword, she declared, it had been kept un-

Feb. 1431. stained with blood. Fifteen different days was she brought into court, to be examined, that her answers might justify the condemning her for witchcraft. But they only made it evident that her mind was still occasionally deluded, by that kind of insanity which has already been described as deceiving her. Even in her miserable prison, she said the voices of her saints sometimes spoke to her; nay, they had advised her in the hall, where she then stood, to answer the inquisitor's questions boldly. "There is always a brightness with the voices," she said. Those in whose hearts a little charity existed, would have pitied her delusions; but the pride of the English knights would not

* See page 477.

allow them to believe, that they could have been tempted to flee before a girl, if she had not deprived them, by witchcraft, of their natural courage. And the bishop of Beauvais had been recommended to the pope, for promotion to the archbishopric of Bonen, by the English; and had lost much of his revenue through the progress of king Charles's arms. Her persisting, at this time, to wear male attire, which she had put on from the day of her quitting home, was regarded by many of her judges as a proof that she was under some compact with Satan to be a woman no more. There was waywardness of mind in it. But she said, a man's dress was more suitable than a female's habit, for one always watched by men.

Various efforts were made to ensnare her into signing a paper, confessing herself a witch. They threatened torture; but she calmly said, "If pain should draw false confessions from me, the words will be yours." Some attempted to draw her to sign, by offers of liberty; which she was too sensible to trust in. "Sign," said a Romish doctor, "or you shall be burnt to-day." "Rather than that," she said, "she would sign;" and a written paper was put before her. What it might contain, she knew not; as she observed to them, that she could neither read, nor write. They then gave her a pen; and made her repeat an oath, to use sorcery no more. After which a clerk took her hand, and made it mark the sign of a cross.

At length she was one morning told, that ^{May 30,} she must, that day, be burned. "O," she ^{1431.} exclaimed, "am I to be so horribly, so cruelly dealt with? I had rather be beheaded seven times." Presently the bishop of Beauvais entered her cell; "Bishop," she said, "I die through you; and I appeal against you before God." Then seeing a monk, who had shewn her kindness, she exclaimed, "Ah monk Peter, where shall I be to-day?" "Have

you not good hope in the Lord?" said this man; whose pity seems to have come from an acquaintance with the mercies of Christ. "Yes," she replied, "if God help me, I shall be in paradise."

Eight hundred armed men guarded the procession, as she was carried into the market-place, in front of the cathedral. "Alas Rouen, Rouen," she cried out, "must I die here?" The cry must have spoken to the hearts of its citizens; who had, in vain, resisted the same foes. Indeed her tears and lamentations melted even cardinal Beaufort into tears! But the English, taught by their priests to burn meek and holy servants of God at home, men whom they could not even charge with breaking the bruised reed, had no thought of sparing a woman, before whom they had fled in battle.

In the market-place a scaffold was erected, over the faggots which were to consume her; and on this she was placed; with a board opposite her, on which might be read in large letters, *witch, heretic, blasphemer, idolator*. Such were the insulting names with which the bishop of an idolatrous church had chosen to brand her; and a doctor now preached a sermon, in her hearing, to convince the populace that she deserved these odious titles. Yet, had witnesses been suffered to appear in her favour, many could have borne testimony, that whereas she was thus charged with blasphemy, she had anxiously spoken, not only to the soldiers, but to the greatest nobles in the French camp, in reproof of their oaths; whilst her abhorrence of the English had much turned upon this, that they were already notorious among the nations for taking the name of God in vain. She heard these unjust reproaches with patience, however, giving herself to prayer; but the English soldiers, who thirsted for her blood, became irritated at the delay. "Do you mean, priest," they cried, "to make us dine here?"

The word was speedily given at their demand;

and two men-at-arms bound their weak victim to the stake. But it would be too painful to describe the horrors of her execution. Suffice it to say, that her dismal shrieks did not prevent her Saviour's name from being distinctly heard, as the last word her lips uttered; and we know that *He heareth the cry of the afflicted* *.

The University of Paris, from its yet unextinguished hatred of the Armagnacs, with whom it chose to confound all the supporters of Charles, or else out of a sinful readiness to flatter *wickedness in high places*, proclaimed its confirmation of the sentence pronounced against Joan. But cardinal Beaufort shewed his conviction of what must soon be the general feeling of the French nation towards her memory, by causing the ashes of the fire to be cast into the river Seine; lest any relic of her bones should be found, and adored by the people, as those of a saint. Nor could any authority prevent the populace from pointing a scornful finger at her judges, whenever they appeared: whilst the bishop of Beauvais was obliged to supplicate the English government for orders to its ^{June.} officers, to protect him from the hatred with which he saw himself surrounded.

Cardinal Beaufort was now the real governor of England. He had laboured to raise himself to this height, from the beginning of the reign; and, by gradually introducing a majority of churchmen into the king's council, he obtained such influence that, whereas it had been expected from a cardinal, that he should resign his bishopric, and his seat at the council table, as became a chief officer of state in the Pope's court, Beaufort managed to procure a petition to himself, requesting that he would continue to serve the king as usefully as before; by retaining the posts he then held. On the

* Job xxxiv. 28.

other hand, though the Duke of Gloucester had been unavoidably left guardian of England, whilst the king and cardinal were absent in France, the latter had aimed as unceasingly at pulling down the duke's power as at building up his own. Hence the duke's salary, as protector, had been diminished every year; till it was reduced from ten thousand pounds to five; and then the cardinal had the king crowned at Westminster; as a pretext for voting, in parliament, that the title of protector should thenceforward cease. In like manner, the coronation at Paris was made the ground for requesting the duke of Bedford to resign the title of regent of France, whilst Henry remained at Paris; that none might be so great as the cardinal in the king's presence. It certainly was not to give the young king authority unsuitable to his yet childish years, that the protector and regent were required to drop their titles; for the royal boy met with unusually harsh treatment. The earl of Warwick was his tutor; a nobleman looked up to as the very mirror of chivalry; but it has been seen, that when the maid of Orleans was *sick and in prison*, his chivalrous spirit did not prevent his insulting over the helpless girl, and grudging her a peaceable death. As little did it restrain him from tyrannizing over his meek-spirited young sovereign. When the king had arrived at an age which makes personal chastisement a cruel insult to the humblest youth, we find the earl of Warwick requesting the council to sanction his having a general authority to inflict it on him. And even when advanced to his seventeenth year, the king received a severe check from his imperious counsellors, though calling themselves his servants, for wishing to be present at their deliberations, that he might learn the duties of his high office. They told him "he should no more attend to matters, in his own person, as oft as he would." It is probable

that these counsellors saw, by this time, that the earl of Warwick's stern treatment of his naturally dull, but gentle pupil, had so broken the young king's spirit, as to make him incapable of any effort to throw off their yoke. By thus continuing to shut him out from hearing discussions, which might have roused his curiosity, and enlarged the range of his thoughts, at an age when the understanding is ordinarily gaining strength, they must have contributed to his passing from youth to manhood without acquiring any firmness of character.

Happily for himself, this poverty of spirit kept him so meek, that, amidst the fiercest strife, he had no personal enemies. No man could hate him. And, whilst his incapacity for governing contributed to bring on that generation the punishment which was to chastise its especial sins, he fulfilled the merciful designs of God towards generations that were to come after; by keeping up that remarkable alternation of weak and vigorous monarchs, which preserved the powers of the king and parliament from overbalancing each other, during the first great period of the growth of our national constitution.

With a council of state ruled by a cardinal, it might be expected that superstition would be in favour, and the reading of the Scriptures severely punished. And accordingly we find, that the deluded worshippers of saints were so zealous, at this period, in visiting the places where they supposed their bodies, or parts of them to be preserved, that in the spring of 1434, no less than sixty-four vessels obtained licenses to carry over, altogether, 3140 English pilgrims into Spain; to pay their vows to, what they idly supposed to be, the mortal remains of the Apostle James *. As to the persecu-

* This pilgrimage appears to have been peculiarly popular this year, from some unknown reason; and must have been a great source of gain to the ship-owners and mariners. For the trade of pilgrim carrying was conducted so briskly, that Richard Walter, master of the Peter

tion of those who searched the Scriptures, to know whether these superstitions needed to be followed to save their souls, it appears from the registers of the bishop of Norwich, that, in the course of three years, not fewer than 120 men and women were arrested on suspicion of Lollardy, in his diocese alone. Too many of this number were so unhappy as to deny their faith in the hour of trial. Others were scourged; and bidden to follow that way no more. Some were faithful unto death; and found worthy to suffer martyrdom by burning. The charges that were listened to against several of these Lollards, prove the gross ignorance of their unhappy persecutors. Thus, one was accused of saying, "That the saints, which are in heaven, ought in no case to be prayed unto, but only God." Another was charged with asserting that dead men's bones ought not to be worshipped; and that men ought not to go on pilgrimage. The witness against one Margery Baxter, deposed "That the said Margery desired, that she, and Joan her maid, would come secretly, in the night, to her chamber; and there they should hear her husband read the law of Christ unto them; which law was written in a book that her husband was wont to read to her by night." Another witness, William Wright, declares, "That his neighbour's wife is of the same sect," that is the Lollards, "and favoureth them, and receiveth them often; and that her daughter is partly of the same sect, and can read English!" The same man was so ungrateful as to turn evidence

of Dartmouth, a port which sent out eight vessels with the like freight, is mentioned, in the list of licenses, as obtaining leave, on the third of February, to carry out and bring back sixty pilgrims; and on the 13th of May he had a second license, to carry sixty more. Henry Hawkyn, master of the Mary of Brixham, is another, who made two voyages in the same season. And though the vessels engaged in this traffic were, principally, from the western ports in the channel; yet there were others belonging to various places, from Hull and Cromer, round to Minehead and Bristol.

against one Nicholas Belward, who had most charitably laboured to bring him to the knowledge of the saving truths of the gospel; and against whom he deposed before the bishop's officers, "That the said Nicholas hath a New Testament which he bought in London for four mares and forty pence; and taught the same William Wright and Margery his wife; and wrought with them continually by the space of one year; and studied diligently upon the said New Testament."

It appears from this evidence, that his Testament had cost the good man above four times the daily pay of a duke for serving in the war at the head of his vassals; or the ordinary price of seven quarters of wheat. Assuredly blessed was he who is thus proved by his poor ignorant accuser, to have loved the words of the Lord *better than gold and silver!* But how many could not possibly raise such a sum! And when we also observe how their fears drove the other devout couple to seek the secrecy of night for reading the law of their Saviour, though they could not even thus escape persecution, these things should fill our hearts with thankfulness, and admiration of the long-suffering of God, who would not be tempted to change His gracious purpose towards our land, nor let the rising light be quenched, as it was in France, notwithstanding the stubbornness with which our forefathers strove to extinguish it; but has so mercifully provided for us, the descendants of that guilty race, that *the poor have the gospel preached to them**; that, of the willing, scarcely any are unable to procure and to read the Scriptures; and that all are invited to hear them read, with prayer.

Yet against the English of that age, who had sinned after the manner of the French in slaying the servants of God, the like punishment was pre-

* Mat. xi. 5.

paring; a long and destructive warfare in the bowels of our land. Though as the crimes committed by the English persecutors never amounted to the hundredth part of the atrocities perpetrated by the exterminators of the Albigenses, so neither were the sufferings to which England was, for a while, most justly condemned, at all comparable to the miseries under which France long groaned.

At home, our countrymen remained for some years longer in peace among themselves. Though an affray between the people and monks of Abingdon, and a rumour that the Lollards were assembling there, to begin a general insurrection, drew the duke of Gloucester to the spot, to apprehend the rioters, several of whom he executed, with the bailiff of Abingdon, accused of being their chief. It may, however, be reasonably doubted whether the condemnation of those who thus suffered was strictly justifiable; since we find it excused, by an idle tale of the bailiff's confessing, on his trial, that he had intended to make priest's heads of as little price as sheep's; three for a penny. But the government felt itself so weak, whilst its warmest friends and the chief vassals of the crown were serving abroad, in the French war, that even election riots were a source of alarm to it; and the anxiety to prevent them produced the important law which shut out all persons, not possessed of freeholds to the amount of forty shillings a year, from the right of voting for knights of the shire. It is well known that this act still continues in force. But as the ill-cultivated land, then rateable at forty shillings, would now be worth fifty pounds a year, and as the great estates allotted to the nobles, by William the Conqueror, were then much less subdivided than now, the right of voting was, every way, far more limited by this enactment, when first made, than it is at present. Yet its effect was undeniably valuable. For whereas by an

of Henry the Fourth's parliament * he enabled nobles to send in overbearing crowds of subviant peasants, from their estates, to decide an action, they could neither command the forty shilling yeomen after the same manner, nor out-number an independent majority of that class by their sales of the same property. Hence, whilst the poorer freeholders only lost a privilege which they had been too dependent to exercise, but as others like them, the yeomen were raised in importance, in the sight of their superiors; by whom they were, in consequence, thenceforward treated with more attention and kindness.

Before the land should be filled with sorrow and bloodshed, by a long continued civil war, its inhabitants were to hear of, rather than witness, a succession of events mortifying to their pride; and well calculated to call the thinking to repent over the national error of continuing its most unjust war in France; since it made it evident that this war, in whose first fruits the people had gloried, was now bringing down a righteous punishment upon the English nation, by ruining its worldly prosperity.

The spirit which the maid of Orleans had roused amongst the defenders of France, was not put down by the cruelty with which the chivalrous commanders of the English and Burgundians had taken vengeance on her for frightening them. From that time Charles VII. though unable to draw any considerable supplies from impoverished provinces, which he dared lay no heavy burdens, was almost uninterruptedly successful in reconquering, by a little and little, the towns and territories which had been allotted to Henry VI. And when the protracted maintenance of a losing warfare, made the English government desirous of sending more troops and money, to be at the disposal of their king's deputy

* See page 413.

those French provinces, which it paid so dearly for intermeddling with, were suffering under famine; the necessary consequence of a season at all unfavourable, when the labours of the husbandman were so frequently interrupted by violence.

It has been noticed, that the misconduct of the duke of Gloucester had given the duke of Burgundy just reason to complain, that his important services to the English cause were repaid with ingratitude. The warmth of his attachment to it being thus first chilled, he now took affront at the duke of Bedford for marrying the Lady Jacquetta of Luxemburgh, a kinswoman of the Burgundian, but of a less elevated rank, within a few months after the death of his former wife, the sister of the duke of Burgundy. But though angry with the English, and earnestly solicited by Charles VII. to say on what terms he would grant him peace, this French prince, to whom his subjects gave the name of the good duke, felt himself bound by his oath given to Bedford; till he was persuaded that the pope might set him free from it, if the English would not terminate the war on reasonable conditions. It was then suggested to the pope, by some friends of Charles, that he should invite all the states and sovereigns concerned, to send ambassadors to meet a papal legate at Arras, in Flanders; there to hold a congress, and arrange the terms of a general peace. He did so; and the invitation was July, 1435. accepted not only by the rival kings, but by the monarchs of Sicily, Denmark, Norway, and Poland. Cardinal Beaufort appeared there, for his sovereign, with twenty-six coadjutors, half English, and half French subjects of Henry.

For Charles, there were the duke of Bourbon and the constable of France, with other counselors, and ecclesiastics. And they offered in their master's name, to let the king of England retain Guienne, and Normandy, on the same terms as his

ancestors had held them, provided he would acknowledge Charles VII. as king of France, and would resign his own indefensible claim to the French crown. So advantageous an offer was never made again; but the pride of the English negotiators would not let them listen to it. And, as they found that the other ambassadors did not choose to support them in demanding more, the cardinal, with his colleagues in his train, quitted Arras in anger; leaving the duke of Burgundy's agents evidently prepared to make a separate peace with the French king. At Rouen cardinal Beaufort joined his kinsman, the duke of Bedford; who took this intelligence so much to heart, that he sickened and died, before he could learn the terms on ^{Sept. 14.} which the Burgundian had returned to his natural allegiance. They were, an acknowledgment from Charles VII. that the murder of the duke's father was a base and treacherous deed, to which he would not have assented, had he then been of man's understanding; and a promise to deliver up, or banish all persons concerned in the crime; Tannegui du Chatel, and the other principal actors, having been dismissed in disgrace, by Charles, some time before.

The duke of Burgundy wrote to king Henry, to state, and apologize for, this change of party. But the indignation of the English court and populace against him was as extreme, as it was unreasonable. The mob rose upon the Flemish merchants residing in England, to murder them for being his subjects. And though the council issued a proclamation for protecting such Flemings as would still swear, that they held Henry VI. for their lawful lord paramount, as king of France; it absurdly affected to give the earldom of Flanders, in Henry's name, to the duke of Gloucester, as forfeited "by the person, who styles himself duke of Burgundy." By another proclamation, the council informed the

world, that the pope had denied having given the duke permission to break the oaths, he had formerly made, of being faithful to England. Unhappily the love of the world had too well conspired with the notorious conduct of the popes, in granting such permissions, to make men insensible of the wickedness of forswearing themselves when any advantage seemed likely to accrue from it. And this age was so generally indifferent even to the dishonour usually attached to perjury, that, when the recent pacification between France and Burgundy was sworn to, the *Sieur de Launay* had not been ashamed to say, publicly, "This is the sixth treaty to which I have been sworn: the first five were all broken, but, let others do what they may, I declare I will keep this!"

The next year *Charles VII.* was assisted by the populace of Paris, in expelling the English from that city; which had been so ruined, by the long protracted warfare in the country round it, that wolves had been met wandering, by night, in its deserted streets. Normandy, Anjou, and Maine, then became almost the only parts of northern France in which *Henry's* title was still acknowledged; and they were kept in subjection by an armed force, which required such frequent recruiting, from its losses in numberless engagements of little note, that the gentry and yeomanry of England were thinned to supply the places of those who perished. In the management of this constantly lessening territory, and disheartening war, the duke of Bedford was succeeded by the duke of York, son of that earl of Cambridge who had been beheaded at Southampton in the last reign. As he was but a boy, when his father engaged in treason, *Henry V.* had allowed this young kinsman to assume the honours and inherit the estates of the earl's brother, that duke of York who perished at Agincourt; and to add the inferior, but important title of earl of March,

which had belonged to his mother's brother, the last of the Mortimers. The duke was a young man, but rapidly rising in popular estimation; and too prudent to remind the reigning family, yet not likely to forget, that, as the acknowledged heir of the Mortimers, he had a claim, which must have been called good in law, to inherit the crown itself, before any princes of the house of Lancaster*. Perhaps he found it the easier to be silent on this dangerous subject, from reflecting, that as the brothers of the late king had no children, and his only son, Henry VI, was an unpromising boy, it was not very improbable that he might, in time, become king of England by regularly succeeding to, instead of disputing, the rights of the house of Lancaster.

For nine years, with but a short interruption, the duke of York continued governor of Henry's French possessions; being as feebly attacked as he was weakly supported. For besides the mutual exhaustion of both parties by the war itself, France suffered once more from famine in this period. And the dearth now extended to England; the bushel of wheat rising to three times the price at which a whole quarter had sold in an abundant year. The consequence of such a famine was not merely distress and want. It destroyed tens of thousands, and when a better harvest made bread somewhat cheaper, the insufficient and unwholesome food on which many of the survivors had been fain to sustain life, shewed its effects in producing a pestilence, which thinned the miserable population of both countries still more. Yet for all this did not the chiefs of the English nation repent of their pride and obstinacy. When the duchess of Burgundy, being nearly related to both the rival kings, had exerted herself so far that the council knew not how to decline sending a deputation, to meet some of Charles's

* See pages 432, 433.

ministers, and treat once more of peace, the instructions which the English government gave to its May 21. 1439. ambassadors, did not permit them to make, or accede to, any such proposals as statesmen could think at all likely to be accepted. By these instructions, they were bidden, first, to ask “as the most reasonable means of peace,” that the adverse party, that is, Charles VII. and his subjects, should forbear hindering Henry VI., from enjoying the crown and kingdom of France, in undisturbed possession. If this should not be attended to, they were to offer, secondly, to allow Charles an ample estate south of the Loire; provided he would consent to hold it as a subject of his rightful sovereign; king Henry. But if the other party will not content them with this offer, the letter of instruction proceeds to direct that then the lord cardinal Beaufort should speak, as if out of his own peculiar love for peace; and should remind the assembled ambassadors of the frightful destruction of their respective countrymen, which the war had already occasioned*, and how it was the duty of Christian princes, “by the law of God, tenderly and brotherly to love their subjects, and other Christian men;” and therefore to show their pity for the poor and innocent people, by giving up their own desires, to stop the shedding of Christian blood. After hearing this harangue, the English were to seem to give way to the Cardinal’s counsel, and to declare that their zeal for the safety of Christen-

* The following extract from the speech drawn up for the Cardinal, in this state-paper, may at once serve as a specimen of our language, and of the irregular manner of spelling, then common; and as a record of the effects produced by such ambition as the world is disposed to admire. “Remembre howe thisse werrys, that have be made in and for the title and claime of the coronne of France, betwix the princes that have strived thereupon, have endured this hundred yere and more: And there haan be moo men slayne, in the continuance of hem, of oo nacion and other, than ben at this day in bothe landys; and so much Christien blode shede, that it is to grete a sorowe and an orroure to thinke, or here it. Addying that, in al the erthe, Cristyn and hethyn, be not so mony noble princes, knights, and squires, and men of fete, as have perished in the same werrres.”

dom, and their regret to see it so thinned of its inhabitants, would dispose them to yield up every thing south of the Loire, except Guienne and Poitou. And, finally, if unable to carry this, they were authorised to consent to a peace on nearly the same terms as the treaty of Bretigny, allowing each prince to style himself king of France, but securing to Henry the entire sovereignty over the extensive old French possessions of the Plantagenets, and over the town and neighbourhood of Calais besides.

Nothing could be much more foolish than this vain attempt to deceive, either the French or their own consciences, as to the extravagance of their final demands, by beginning with proposals still more absurd, and then affecting to be won over by a preconcerted speech from the person who it was known must have had the chief share in deciding what claims they should adhere to. It was also grievous hypocrisy to dwell on the guilt of shedding the blood of those whom Christ bade them love, when they were intending to continue the war, unless Charles VII., now almost uniformly successful, would accept such conditions as the French nation had never assented to, but when they had lost all hope of defending their country from the spoiler. The treaty, of course, came to nothing; but for this folly and hypocrisy cardinal Beaufort's administration must not be condemned as if alone blameable. The dukes of Gloucester and York, and indeed the whole body of the English nobility, were to the full as much bent as he on maintaining the very unjust pretensions set up by Henry V. The duke of Gloucester, especially, was so little disposed to either mercy or justice, if likely to interfere with the establishment of those pretensions, that when this sinful war had continued another year, he even recorded his public protest against the permission which the English ministers were then proposing to give to the duke of Orleans,

June,
1440.

to ransom himself. This ill-used French prince could appeal to his keepers to testify, that neither by word, writing, nor action, had he ever broken the oath he gave on surrendering himself a captive at Agincourt, notwithstanding the cruelty of the English government in detaining him a prisoner from the prime to the decline of his life; and thus compelling him to pass twenty-four wearisome years useless, as he observed, to his friends and his tenants, and a stranger to his loved native land; and this for defending his country in battle, at the bidding of his sovereign. And even the tardy mercy which the duke of Gloucester was so loathe to see allowed him was, in truth, a hard bargain, extorted from his anxiety to be once more at large and at home. For he was not allowed to quit England till he had paid down 21,000*l.* and had given security for the payment of 54,000*l.* more, as the price of his liberty, besides binding himself to return into captivity within forty days after the expiration of a year, if he should not in the mean time prevail upon his cousin, Charles VII., to make peace with England on such terms as would content the latter. To this last condition, however, was annexed an engagement to restore to him the money paid for his ransom; and therefore the English government chose rather to hold over him the threat of demanding his return, than actually to insist on his coming back when he failed to procure the peace they would have accepted.

The duke of Gloucester however did not content himself with opposing this negociation, whilst it was pending. He very soon after laid before
1441. the king, a long list of charges against Cardinal Beaufort, in which he treated it as a crime, in him, to have let the duke of Orleans purchase his liberty; and put this measure on a level with the graver accusations of his having taken advantage of Henry's minority to procure the gift of large estates

out of the royal domains, and a grant for exempting his wealthy bishopric from the payment of those tenths with which the clergy were wont to tax themselves, when the laity gave the government a fifteenth of their moveables *. Henry, now come of age, referred the whole to his council; and, as the cardinal's influence was paramount there, these charges fell to the ground. But the enmity between these two heads of parties could not be so suppressed. It made the duke of Gloucester gather around him all such as disliked the Romish priesthood, but had too many prejudices to join the Lollards; or loved their own sins too well to bear the holy preaching of those reformers. He would gladly have seen his royal nephew as alive as himself to the frauds by which the priests sought to prop up their declining authority over the minds of the people; and a circumstance which occurred at St. Albans, when Henry and he were visiting the monastery there, gave him a favourable opportunity for teaching the young king to be prudently mistrustful of their arts. It

* The author would here wish to correct the account he has given in p. 445, of the grants made by parliament to Henry V. after the battle of Agincourt. They are stated at two tenths and two fifteenths, which should properly be equivalent to a third. But historians have neglected to notice a great change made near a hundred years before, in the collection of this kind of tax. In the sixth year of Edward III., that monarch promised his parliament, that he would be content to abide by an old valuation, in levying their grant of a fifteenth of the property of the peers and knights, and a tenth of that of citizens and burgesses; instead of exacting those proportions in the rigorous manner described in pages 10 and 11. This concession became a fixed rule; and from thenceforward, every town and district knew what it had to pay, when a fifteenth and a tenth were granted. But as the old valuation was known to be less than the true value of these proportions of the subject's moveables in his time, it would fall still shorter of their value as the nation gradually grew richer. We learn from Hollingshed, a writer of Queen Elizabeth's time, that this fixed valuation was 37,930*l.* which in Henry the fifth's reign, would be about as much money in weight of silver, as 74,000*l.*; and as that king, on the occasion here spoken of, had a double grant, it would bring him 128,000*l.*

The two tenths granted by the clergy at the same time were probably also fixed sums of less value than a real fifth of their incomes.

had been so managed, that a countryman should pretend to be suddenly restored to sight, at the shrine of St. Alban, whilst the king was in the town. On this the populace ran about crying, "a miracle," and the priests set the bells a ringing, and began to chaunt a hymn of triumph in the church. Henry was disposed to make no difficulty of believing the man's tale, who assured him he had come from as far as Berwick, having been advised so to do, in a dream; and that he had never been able to see before from his birth. "That I can easily believe," said the duke, looking earnestly at the man's eyes, "For I think you cannot see much yet." "Yes, Sir," said the countryman, "I thank the holy martyr, I can now see as well as any man." "If so," said the duke, "of what colour is my cloak?" "Red," replied he. "And this?" "Black." "Put him in the stocks then, mayor, for a cheat," said the duke, "a miracle might suddenly enable the blind to distinguish colours; but then he could no more have told which names belonged to which, than he can tell our names, whom he has not seen before."

The cardinal was not the man to bear this hostility to himself and his order, without seeking revenge. But before attempting the duke's destruction, he contrived to humble him, in the sight of the nation, by degrading his duchess. She was at this time the first princess of the land. For Henry the fifth's widow was lately dead; after having sunk herself by marrying Owen Tudor, a private Welsh gentleman in her service. And Jacquetta of Luxemburgh, widow to the regent Bedford, had also forfeited her rank by marrying a commoner, Sir Richard Wydevile*. Notwithstanding however

* Both the husbands underwent a long imprisonment for marrying these princesses without the permission of the king, or rather of the council. But Tudor's sons were acknowledged and treated as his brothers, by Henry VI., and we shall see his grandson mount the throne of England, with a grand-daughter of Wydevile, for his queen.

her elevated station, the duchess of Gloucester had never enjoyed the respect of the people. She had now been listening to flatterers, who set before her the hopes of seeing the duke of Gloucester succeed his nephew as king; and herself become, by consequence, the queen of England. But whilst she thought their conversations secret, the arts by which these people were seeking to impose on her, enabled the cardinal's creatures to accuse her of conspiring with Margery Jourdemayn, a reputed witch, and a priest named Bolingbroke, to kill the king by sorcery. The accusers asserted, that they had made a waxen image of Henry VI., which was to be set before the fire; and to produce such magical effects upon the unconscious Henry, that he was to pine away as the wax melted. Absurd as this story was, it suited the superstition of the court, and was made an excuse for burning Jourdemayn; executing 1443. Bolingbroke as a traitor; and obliging the duchess to walk barefoot, carrying a wax-taper in her hand, through the chief streets of the city of London. After which she was sent to the Isle of Man, to remain there, for the rest of her days, in the custody of Sir Thomas Stanley.

Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury, was now chancellor; Molyns, bishop of Chichester, was keeper of the privy seal: Ayscough, bishop of Salisbury, was clerk of the council; the bishops of Bath and Wells, and of Carlisle held other high offices; and ecclesiastics were employed as secretaries, ambassadors, masters of the rolls, and even as physicians to the King; whilst two laymen only, De la Pole, earl of Suffolk, and lord Say, found sufficient favour in the cardinal's sight to be placed in the king's household, and reckoned amongst the actual governors of the country. Of these two the earl of Suffolk was the most aspiring. And whilst the duke of Gloucester would have matched the king in marriage with a daughter of the count of Armagnac,

whose power in the south of France was believed sufficient to preserve Gascony for the English, Suffolk was turning his thoughts to find some lady of enough wit and spirit to rule the king ; and so circumstanced as to be conscious that she owed her elevation to his management. Such a person he found in Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Regnier ; a French nobleman, who bore the high titles of king of Sicily and of Jerusalem, and duke of Anjou and Maine. His right to the kingdoms of Sicily and Jerusalem was little better than an idle tale ; and he had been kept out of his dukedoms by the English for his faithful adherence to Charles VII. But his titles and his poverty equally suited the earl of Suffolk's views ; for his rank being superior to that of the count of Armagnac, made the match sound more plausible ; whilst his utter inability to give any dower with his daughter, would serve to convince both him and her that the proposer of the marriage could only intend to be repaid by their gratitude. Having brought the king to wish for this match, the earl further persuaded him to sign a document, which he next got the parliament to sanction, authorising him to negotiate at once for Henry's marriage and for a peace : and declaring him pardoned before-hand, for any error of judgment into which he might fall, in settling the terms of both. Thus empowered, the earl went to France ; and, as the near relationship of Margaret to the French royal family gave Charles VII. an especial right to interfere, he was there told, that the lady's friends could not consent to give her in marriage to the king of England, unless the English would restore Anjou and Maine to her father.

It would have been well if every acre of French ground, still held by the English, had been given up to its rightful sovereign ; as a proof that England repented the crime of its seizure. But as the earl had taken no such conscientious view of the invasion

of France, it was in him a betraying of his country, to give up those provinces merely that he might carry his own private ends, by making a queen of England who was likely to make him the first minister of the crown. This, however, he hesitated not to do; and having further negotiated a truce with Charles, who would not now consent to a peace, he returned to England to ask parliament for money to pay the expenses of bringing over the intended queen; as the titular king her father was too poor to send her respectably attended.

It was one of the charges made against the ruling administration, that they encouraged sheriffs, and other officers presiding at elections, to return such members to parliament as would serve the court; when the choice of a majority of the electors had fallen upon different persons. Another expedient, not unfrequently had recourse to for the purpose of making a parliament submissive, was to summon its members to meet, not in London, but in some one of the lesser towns of the kingdom, where they found themselves so ill accommodated, and raised the prices of lodging and provisions to such a height by bidding against each other, that they soon became willing to vote whatever the court desired, rather than be kept together, disputing points which the king's ministers were not likely to give up till after a long delay. By some such arts, the last parliament had been brought to give the earl of Suffolk his remarkable commission; and another parliament now sanctioned his yielding up territories, whose loss must hasten that of Normandy, and voted a subsidy for enabling him to escort the princess Margaret; besides farther requesting that the King, who had just made him a marquess, 'would ever esteem him as a most true and faithful subject.' In all which votes it went against the wishes of the nation.

The policy of Suffolk now seemed likely to secure for him every object which his ambition had tempted

him to desire. He revisited France, and was received there with honour, as the favourite of a powerful sovereign. He obtained Margaret's gratitude; brought her with much triumphant
May, 1444. pomp to England; saw that her beauty and her manly understanding, gave her the entire command of the docile king; and found her his attached friend, desirous to see him the greatest of her husband's subjects; as a proof of which, he was forthwith promoted to a dukedom.

The king, meanwhile, appeared incapable of comprehending that eager desire to govern, of which he felt nothing in his own breast. He was glad to be relieved, by his queen and the duke of Suffolk, from wearying himself with affairs of state; and was thankful to them for giving him leisure to pursue the bent of his own benevolent mind in planning and laying the foundation of the two colleges of Eton, and of King's, Cambridge; by which he now, in his early youth, made a noble provision for the instruction of boys and youths. But no man can innocently neglect to do the whole of his duty, in that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call him. He was called to govern his nobles, as well as to promote the education of the sons of his gentry. And whilst he shrunk from the toil, the counsellors in whom he trusted, (if queen Margaret did not join in the plot) were growing daily more jealous of the duke of Gloucester's influence with the people; which had been much increased of late, in consequence of his being known to speak angrily and contemptuously of the courtiers, for surrendering his brother's French conquests. As the duke had no children, the king had been persuaded to give Suffolk a reversionary grant of the succession to his uncle Gloucester's estates and castles in Pembrokeshire; and this added another snare to those which already beset the favourite. The cardinal had long been tempted to the same crime as Suffolk now me-

clitiated ; and they caused a parliament to be summoned to meet at Bury St. Edmunds, where the influence of the duke of Suffolk secured the attention of the country people to an order, privately sent round the neighbourhood, requiring them to arm and watch the roads.

To this parliament the duke of Gloucester came ; and was, the next day, arrested on a ^{Feb. 10,} charge of treason, by the lord Beaumont, ^{1447.} grand constable of England, accompanied by the cardinal's nephew, Beaufort, duke of Somerset. Twelve days after, Gloucester, though seen well the evening before, was found dead in his bed. The friends of the king's ministers gave out that he died of apoplexy. But the voice of the people asserted that he was murdered. The small number of attendants which the deceased duke had brought with him to Bury, affords a strong presumption that he had not come thither with any intention of committing violence. They were all seized, however, when he was ; and five of them, being carried to London, were there sentenced to die the death of traitors, and were hanged accordingly ; and then cut down, as usual, whilst still alive, to be killed over again by fiercer tortures. But at that moment, the duke of Suffolk, who had stood by from the beginning of their sufferings, produced the king's order for sparing their lives. Henry had, doubtless, been persuaded to believe them guilty of treason ; but he abhorred the punishment assigned to that offence. "It is a shame to use any Christian so cruelly, on my account ;" said he.

But six weeks more, and cardinal Beaufort found himself on his death-bed. Then he perceived, too late, the vanity of riches. His attendant chaplain has recorded the cries which burst, at that hour, from this poor terrified sinner. "Why should I die !" he exclaimed, "having so much riches ! If the whole realm could save my life, I am able, either

by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie! Will not death be hindered? Will money do nothing? When my nephew of Bedford died, I thought myself half up the wheel. But when I saw my other nephew, Gloucester, dead, then I thought myself a match for kings; and that my treasures would so increase, that I might live to become a pope. But I see now the world faileth me; and so I am deceived! I beseech you all to pray for me!"

Fifty years had this unhappy man been a bishop. Yet one would suppose, from his language, he had never heard of a Saviour. While in health, he had looked forward to purchasing the forgiveness of his sins with those riches which, he now felt, could not prolong his stay one hour upon that earth to which his heart clung. He had then made his will; and had stipulated, according to the value of the money, or plate, therein devised to different churches or monasteries, how many, and what prayers should be offered up after his death, to procure a change of the sentence that must otherwise pass upon his soul. And he had farther required his executors to provide, that ten thousand masses should be said, "with as much speed as possible," at a shilling a piece, for the same purpose*.

When the man whom the pope and the king delighted to honour, as the first churchman in England, was such as cardinal Beaufort; and when nearly all his brother prelates were avowedly devoting themselves to affairs of state, so as to fill the chief offices in their sovereign's court, it was not to

* It is rare to find a will, in that age, which does not betray, that the testator built his hopes of pardon on the like sandy foundation; instead of resting on *the rock of ages*.

Thus a lord Abergavenny, appointing Archbishop Arundel his executor, says, "I desire that 10,000 masses be said for my soul, in all possible haste, after my death, by the most honest priest that can be found; and that four good priests be found, for ten years, to sing for my soul and for the soul of my lord Sir John Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, and for all the souls to whom I owe obligation."

be expected that the priests, who looked up to them as rulers and guides, should be much holier than they. And it so happens, that the Popish clergy of this day have put upon record an awful testimony of their own wickedness. For, meaning to take advantage of the influence which their bishops now had, in the royal councils, they represented it as a grievance, that many parish-priests had been indicted of late, in divers parts of the kingdom, for robberies, rapes, and other felonies. Wherefore they besought the king, not to regard such indictments, as false calumnies against their order, but, to consent that every such priest should have his pardon, for any of these gross crimes already committed, or that might be committed, before the 1st of June next coming; on condition of the clergy's undertaking, that every priest in 1441. the kingdom should pay 13s. 4d. into the royal treasury, as the price they would gladly give, to have their fellows escape unpunished. Yet, on what easy terms the clergy could previously get off, even when convicted of a felony, may be understood from a fact which occurred but five years before; when a clergyman, being harassed to pay a debt, prevailed upon another to accuse him of a felony, and pleaded guilty to the accusation, that he might be accounted his bishop's prisoner, and thus elude being apprehended by his creditor on a civil claim*.

When, however, the beauty of our Lord's kingdom on earth seems most defaced, and its glory most quickly fading away, then it is that a careful search into passing events, will most frequently discover some peculiar preparation going on for its advancement; that its growth may be known to be not of man, but of God. Thus it was now. When the Romish priesthood seemed to have such in-

* In this case the commons petitioned the king to prevent such a fraud. And he, in consequence, ordered the bishop either to surrender his prisoner, or pay the debt.

fluence over kings, that their united power must surely quench every spark of light; when the clergy, who should themselves have shone as the stars in the firmament, were lost in darkness; then did it please God to lead men to the discovery of an art admirably fitted for dispelling the gross ignorance of the Christian world, and for making the Scriptures more accessible than ever they had been before. He has expressly said, *In the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom* *. And if He condescended to say this of the workmen in gold, and the carvers of wood, whose skill was to be employed for decorating the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was soon to pass into disuse, it is surely meet that we should ascribe to His wisdom, and mercy, the gift of that ingenuity which produced, at this time, the art of printing; an invaluable instrument in the hands of those employed to build up that far more glorious temple, the church of Christ, the eternal *habitation of God through the Spirit* †.

Before printing was invented, the Scriptures could only be copied out by the pen; and no poor man could possibly save enough, from his earnings, to pay the higher wages of a skilful copyist, for the many days' labour required to write out the whole Bible. Books were then luxuries, only within the reach of the wealthy. It was one of the most creditable transactions of the regent Bedford's life, that he spent 4,400*l.*, or the value of 5,500 oxen, in purchasing the library accumulated by three successive kings of France. Yet this royal library contained but 853 volumes; and they of very little real worth. His brother, the duke of Gloucester, had also been a liberal purchaser of books; and gave to Oxford what was, then, the most valuable part of its public library; whereas many a humble

* Exod. xxxi. 6.

† Eph. ii. 22.

member of that university has, now, a larger collection of books in his own rooms. But it is more material to observe, that, as the rich in this world's goods have not often been lovers of the word of God, copies of the Scriptures were rare as well as dear*; so that it was indeed necessary for the people, to *seek the law at the mouth of the priests*†; and if he could not, or would not teach his flock, scarcely one in ten thousand could search the Bible for instruction. Whereas, by means of printing, not only the Scriptures, but the exhortations of those whom God raises up, from time to time, to teach their generation after the manner peculiarly suited to meet the wants of each varying age, are spread from the palace to the cottage; and *the poor have the gospel preached to them* by the dead, or the distant living, even if those who ought especially to care for them, be negligent, or incompetent. But, at the time of its invention, the art of printing was also a most precious gift, from its peculiar fitness for thwarting the pope's endeavours to keep the world in darkness. For when he, or his servants the priests, had procured the death of any faithful preacher, the good man's words, being committed to the press, were often made known in places which the papal authority had prevented his visiting; and were read by more thousands than could possibly have listened to his tongue. The press became a preacher, whose voice no pope could stop.

But though the invention of printing proved infinitely more important to England than any political transaction whatever, it was not invented by Englishmen, but by John Guthenberg, an engraver, at Mayence in Germany. The art 1449.
was not put into practice here, till above twenty years after its discovery. And, in the mean while, another event had also occurred abroad, which

* See pp. 262, 265.

† Mal. ii. 7.

formed another step in the preparation making for that extensive restoration of the knowledge of the gospel which was especially to bless our own land. This event was the entire destruction of the Greek empire by the Turks; who captured its chief, and its last city, Constantinople, in 1453: and thereby drove many Greeks of an intellectual turn, and of considerable acquirements, to seek a maintenance by teaching their beautiful and expressive language in the flourishing cities of southern Europe. The main effect of the study of the Greek tongue, thenceforward uninterruptedly cultivated by European scholars, has been to improve their literary taste, and style of composition; but, at the same time, to strengthen that *carnal mind*, which the word of God declares to be *enmity against him, because it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be**. The most popular, and universally read author in the Greek language is Homer; and the character to which he gives most prominence is that of a restless, passionate, inexorable, fierce warrior; such as no reader can be won, by this poet's art, to admire, without its thereby becoming the more difficult for him to turn to the gospel, and adore the character that sets before us, as saying, *Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*†. But the language of ancient Greece had admired moralists, as well as popular poets; and almost every sentiment, which their ingenuity or eloquence fixes in the heart, tends to increase the difficulty of which our Saviour spake, when he said, *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only*‡. Whilst their persuasions to virtue, are but attempts to gainsay His express declaration, *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in*

* Rom. viii. 7.

† Matt. xi. 29, and v. 39.

‡ John v. 44.

the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. Without Me, ye can do nothing *. But untoward as the general tendency of such literature must be, for the forming of the Christian character, still the acquirement of the Greek tongue, particularly whilst it was yet a novelty, disposed men of inquiring minds, to search the New Testament, thus re-opened to them in its original language. And though the Latin translation, called the Vulgate, then and now used by the Romish church, was not so unfaithful a copy as to differ very materially from the Greek, the different attention with which they examined the latter had a blessed effect upon many scholars. They also, naturally, next desired to know, what light the Greek divines might have thrown upon those Scriptures, which spake to them in their native tongue; and though most of those divines were discovered to be not less defective teachers than their cotemporaries in western Europe, still the scholars of countries acknowledging the pope as head of the church, gained much by finding that there were Christian writers, who, having the like respect for the authority of Christ, and of the Scriptures, either knew nothing, or cared nothing about the high claims of the pope.

But to quit those foreign transactions, which were gradually to produce their happiest fruits in England, and to return to what was now passing at the court of Henry VI., the duke of Suffolk ruled there uncontrouled. The deaths of those prominent political chiefs, Gloucester and the cardinal, had taken away two princes, his superiors in the eyes of the people. And they had been quickly followed by Beaufort, duke of Somerset; who committed suicide, after an unsuccessful struggle to succeed to his uncle, the cardinal's influence. The guardianship of this duke's only daughter, Margaret, was

* John xv. 4, 5.

obtained by Suffolk, from the king; and he had managed to remove the successor to the ducal title of Somerset from court, by making him Henry's lieutenant in France; whilst he kept the duke of York engaged at a distance, as governor of Ireland. Yet neither the removal of rivals, nor the steady friendship of the queen, could give durability to the duke of Suffolk's power.

The ill paid soldiers of the duke of Somerset had surprised, and pillaged a town in Brittany; and king Charles, glad of an excuse for proceeding to the entire expulsion of the English armies from his kingdom, declared the truce broken; marched into Normandy; and was soon master of Rouen. This irritated the pride of the nation, and its anger fell on the duke of Suffolk; as if he could have prevented the success of the French. Many now recollected how stoutly the duke of Gloucester had stood up against the surrender of those provinces from which the king of France had made his attack, in the present instance, on Normandy. Forgetting, therefore, that duke's dissolute life, whilst they remembered his cheerful hospitality, he was often in their mouths, as the good duke Humphrey; and they execrated his supposed murderers, with whom they believed the duke of Suffolk to be deeply concerned, though they knew not how to prove it. The popular indignation thus fermenting, soon became so notorious, that the duke thought it prudent to address the king in parliament, and appeal to his past labours and losses in the war, as proofs that he had not been an unfaithful servant of his country. A few days after, however, the house of commons came before the lords; and required that the duke should be committed to the Tower, Jan. 28,
1450. whilst they were preparing a bill of impeachment against him. This request the court did not dare to refuse; but when the commons had proceeded to draw up their charges, the duke was

ght from the Tower to hear them read. They
ed him of uniformly betraying the interests of
and, and in particular cases the secrets of his
eign's council, to the French king; and of
ing to get the English crown into his own
y, by marrying his infant ward, Lady Margaret
fort, to his own son;—she being, they ob-
d, the presumptive heiress of the royal house
ncaster, as long as the king had no children.
however, could not be justly said; as the first
forts, though children of John of Gaunt, by
erine Swynford, his wife, were not capable of
iting from him; being born before his mar-
with her. Nor was the charge of treason
more plausible. The duke declared, that the
the years, and the places, in which and at
a, he was accused of holding traitorous com-
cations with Charles VII., should all be dis-
ed. But he added, that, without admitting any
of their charges to be just, he was content to
the king's pleasure, for his sentence.

enry had not the courage to uphold him against
popular outcry. So the Chancellor, Kemp,
bishop of York, informed the parliament, that
ing, without pronouncing the duke guilty of
things whereof he was accused, but acting
the duke's appeal to his good pleasure, had
ed him to quit England, and to remain abroad
ears.

ter this concession to the wishes of the people,
reasurer ventured to inform a parliament which
t Leicester, that the debts of the crown were
y double what they had been, when before
known; and that the annual expences of the
household exceeded the revenue appropri-
to its maintenance, by 36,000*l*. On hearing
the commons consented, for the first time, to
e an income tax on all rents of lands and
es of office, to the amount of two and a half per

cent. on every income of from two to forty pounds a year; of five per cent. from that to four hundred pounds a year; and of ten per cent. on every greater income.

In the mean while the duke, after having narrowly escaped the violence of the Londoners, who sought to slay him, had retired to his estates in Suffolk. From thence he wrote his son such an excellent parting letter of advice, as shows that adversity was teaching himself an useful lesson; and then having called together his tenants and neighbours, and conjured them to believe him innocent of the charges brought against him, he set sail, with a few attendants, from Ipswich.

Off Calais their vessel was visited by a boat from a large ship, called the Nicholas of the Tower; and the duke was told, that he must go aboard her, and speak with her captain. He did so; but was greeted, on the deck of the Nicholas, with the insulting salutation of 'Welcome, Traitor.' He then underwent a mock trial, before the captain and his crew. Two days after, he was bidden to confess his

May 2. sins to the man-of-war's chaplain; and then to go into a boat alongside: in which were a block, and a sailor with a rusty sword. The fellow told him, that as he was a knight, he should die by a sword, as became a soldier; but struck the duke several blows, before he could smite off his head. The next day his remains, and such property as he had about his person, were laid on the beach near Dover; and were then watched by the sheriff of Kent, till he had sent information to the king, and had received his orders for delivering them to the widowed duchess. Henry and his queen were much shocked and distressed, by the intelligence. Yet none of the persons concerned in detaining, and putting the late duke to death, were ever brought to trial for their crime. The murder of a nobleman, but lately the first subject in the kingdom, was

passed over in such a manner as the unauthorized execution of the meanest felon would not be now. Since the Nicholas had other ships in company, it was not for want of evidence, that no attempt was made to convict her captain; but from a belief that he had acted by the orders of a party too powerful for a weak government to punish.

By this time it was heard in England, that a reinforcement of 3000 men, sent out to Normandy under Sir Thomas Kyriel, and joined there by as many more, had been utterly routed by an inferior number of French. And soon after, ^{April 18th.} that the duke of Somerset was besieged in Caen, the last considerable town, left to the English, of all Henry the Fifth's conquests. Hence arose more discontent at home; where the populace had murdered Molyne, bishop of Chichester, as concerned with the duke of Suffolk in giving up Anjou and Maine. And they next fell upon the bishop of Salisbury, and slew him; as another of those political churchmen who were misgoverning the country. Their ill humour was now fomented by the partisans of the duke of York, who was angry at having been removed from the command in France, to make way for the duke of Somerset; and presently made still more angry by his surrendering Caen. For that town had been made over to the duke of York for his private property, and was bravely defended by his steward Sir David Hall; when a stone shot, which had flown over the walls, fell between the duchess of Somerset and her children, and so terrified her, that, forgetting what was due to her husband's honour, she would not let him rest, till he had compelled Sir David to yield up the place to the French, in despite of that officer's remonstrances.

But any losses abroad were of little moment to the welfare of the nation, compared with the long course of civil strife now beginning in England.

The first to rebel were the Kentish populace, under the leading of Jack Cade, an Irishman, who passed himself off to them as one of the Mortimers, and cousin to the duke of York. The numbers who followed him were said to amount to 20,000 men; and, with this host, he sat down on Blackheath; shewing that he had learned the profession of a soldier, by the skill with which he caused his encampment to be fortified. From thence he sent to the king a memorial, purporting to be "The complaints of the commons of Kent." The list contained no such grievances as could at all justify their thus appearing in arms, to enforce attention to their requests; for they had little more to complain of than that the nation could no longer riot in the spoils of France; and that the king chose to be counselled by the kinsmen and friends of the duke of Suffolk, when he ought rather, they said, to invite around him the duke of York, and the nobles of his party. Such a memorial gave strong ground for concluding, that their leader was an agent of the duke of York; especially as it well suited his views that they should also demand "the punishment of the false traitors who contrived the duke of Gloucester's death." A petition for the repeal of the statute of labourers*, and another for the correction of some tax-gatherers, were about the only articles which spoke the natural wishes of the mob.

On this occasion, however, the king felt the duty of defending his peaceable subjects; and quitting Leicester in haste, he marched southwards with an army which swelled as it advanced. By the time he reached London, Cade had retreated upon Sevenoaks, and two of the Staffords, near kinsmen to the archbishop of Canterbury and duke of Buck-

* See p. 353, for the nature of this statute; but the terms had been altered, as shall be mentioned in another place.

ingham, there made an attack upon the Kentish men; but were defeated, and both slain. Seeing that his followers were much encouraged by this victory, Cade led them again towards London; whilst the irresolute king dismissed his troops, and committed his minister, lord Say, to the Tower, to soothe the populace; who hated that nobleman, for having been the colleague and friend of the duke of Suffolk.

The mayor found the citizens unwilling to shut their gates against Cade; and that rebel chief, **July 3.** riding over the bridge, advanced along the streets as far as the London Stone, which he struck with his sword, and exclaimed, "Now is Mortimer lord of this city!" He then had lord Say, and his son-in-law, Cromer, sheriff of Kent, brought before him; and caused their heads to be struck off in Cheapside. But his command of the city soon tempted Cade, and his needy followers, to begin robbing friends as well as foes; and the citizens, frightened for their property, armed themselves at nightfall, and admitted some soldiers within the gates; by whose assistance they made a vigorous attack on the main body of the rebels, quartered in the houses on, and about, the bridge. The struggle was a hard-contested one; and kept up with various success the whole night.

The next day the archbishops of Canterbury and York, and Wainfleet bishop of Winchester, held a conference with Cade, in St. Margaret's church; and he consented to draw off his men, on condition of receiving the king's pardon for himself and them; to which bishop Wainfleet affixed the great seal forthwith.

Two days after, Cade regretted having given way so easily; and would have again attacked the city. But the numbers who returned, at his call, were insufficient for his purpose; and, when they had retreated once more, they fell to quarrelling about

the spoil, which they had just carried off from Southwark. Cade then mounted a horse, and rode away from them. But a thousand marks were by this time offered for his head; as he had broken the conditions of his pardon. And they were soon claimed by Alexander Iden; a Kentish gentleman who had tracked him into Sussex, and there July 11. slew him in an orchard; fighting too desperately to be taken alive.

Ireland was the only quarter in which the government had been uninterruptedly gaining strength, during the past eighteen months. The choice of the duke of York for its governor might have been made by Suffolk from no better motive, than to keep him away from the English court. But it had been very beneficial to the king's affairs in Ireland. For, besides being a person of firm character, and much prudence in worldly affairs, the duke of York was respected by the Anglo-Irish, as almost one of themselves, and the greatest personage of their own class; being the representative of Lionel, the first duke of Clarence, and heir, through him*, to the great property of the De Burghs, in Connaught and Ulster. The English government sent no army with him; but he had stipulated for receiving 4,000*l.* a year from the English treasury; and that all the revenue of Ireland should be at his untrouled disposal.

He found the royal power reduced to its lowest ebb, from the neglect which Ireland had suffered; whilst Henry V., and the duke of Bedford, had been exhausting all the resources of government in vain efforts to subjugate France; letting go of what they ought to have held firmly, to grasp at what was beyond their reach. The authority of the king's lieutenant had so dwindled away as to be of no real use to the subject, beyond the limits of a dis-

* See p. 283.

strict comprehending little more than the county of Dublin. Somewhat farther, indeed, its name aided the Anglo-Irish in preserving their estates, and lawless independence; by a miserable system of alternate warfare and ill-observed truces. But, beyond this, the wild Irish had been long gaining ground; without forming any national government to distribute justice among themselves, and to impose a check on the hideous excesses, to which angry passions drive the unrenewed man; when wrongs provoke, and no fears restrain him. All that could be done, with his means, in so short a time, the duke of York appears to have done. He made treaties, with such chieftains as would accept of terms at once moderate and just. And he let it be seen, by those who at first hesitated to treat with him, that he intended to adhere faithfully to all such covenants as he made. He was affable, and kind to those, of every party, who visited his court. And, on the other hand, he made laws, enacting, that no lord should keep more horse or footmen than he could support, without burden to his neighbours; and that each should give in a list of his retainers, to the sheriff of his county. Whilst it was declared lawful to kill any persons found robbing the king's subjects; and a reward was to be levied on the district, for the benefit of those who should rid it of robbers. To supply the government with an available force, every landed estate in Ireland, of forty pounds a year, was required to furnish a mounted archer; and to maintain him when employed. And the duke farther obtained the repeal of an act which had relieved the king's Anglo-Irish tenants from the old feudal demands, for their service in the field. Yet he himself appeared but once in arms; chusing to confine his military labours, almost entirely, to the putting the royal castles in a better state for defence.

So far the duke of York did well. But the praise

he obtained, added to those temptations against which he had not been taught to seek for help. He could not but reflect that the duke of Gloucester's death had made him the presumptive heir to the childless king; even if he should allow it to be forgotten that he was the representative of the rights of Lionel duke of Clarence, in England as well as Ireland. Yet in the English house of commons, the eldest branch of the Beauforts * had been spoken of, as having the first claim to the succession to the crown. And hence he was naturally jealous, lest the duke of Somerset † should persuade the king to have their family placed, by act of parliament, on the same footing as though descended from John of Gaunt by lawful wedlock; and an ill rule of the Romish church would have made the subsequent marriage of that prince with his harlot, a sufficient excuse for this. The duke of York's feelings were shared by his partisans in England; and betrayed, with exaggerations, by their reports of the changes he was bent upon making in the English court; which so irritated the queen that she prevailed on her husband to send letters into Cheshire and Wales, desiring that the duke might be prevented from disembarking; if he should appear off the western coast.

The letters were sent in vain. His landing was only so far opposed as to betray the hostile temper of the court. And the duke, as he marched Sept. 1, 1451. towards London with a train which grew to 4000 men, assured the magistrates and sheriffs, through whose jurisdiction he passed, that he was resolved to maintain his allegiance to the king; and had no other aim than to save the country from being ruined, by the evil councils of the duke of Somerset.

The news of the loss of Guienne, and of Bour-

* Represented by Lady Margaret Beaufort, see p. 525.

† Edmund Beaufort, her uncle.

deaux, the family inheritance of the Plantagenets, and the last possessions of the English in France, except the useless and expensive town of Calais, had just reached England; and disposed the people to acquiesce in some unlawful violence; so as it might but rid them of the ministers to whom they attributed those losses, which they unhappily thought more disgraceful to their country than the injustice of its late wars.

The duke therefore reached London without drawing his sword. But though he thought fit to let Henry perceive his power by going into the king's presence, followed by a great number of armed men, he knelt before him as his sovereign. And, having obtained a promise that a parliament should speedily be summoned, the duke withdrew in peace to his castle of Fotheringhay.

In the interval, the duke of Somerset arrived from France; and was most cordially received by the king and queen, as one who had a common interest with them in preventing the duke of York from overawing the government. And, when the parliament met, no important measures resulted, though the unpopularity of Somerset was shewn by the violence of the crowd; who pillaged his house in Blackfriars, and compelled him to escape across the Thames; whereas, the duke of York found a powerful party among the nobility, ready to go any lengths with him. Of these, the first in rank was the duke of Norfolk, an hereditary enemy to the house of Lancaster. But the most important were the Neviles, kinsmen to the duchess of York; of whose family were the lords, Latimer, Falconberg, and Abergavenny, with the powerful earls of Westmoreland, Salisbury, and Warwick; the last, a nobleman so successful in rebellion, till he perished by it, as to earn the name of *the king-maker*.

The reign of Henry V., had kept this ill lesson constantly before the eyes of the people, and fixed

it in their minds as a sure maxim, that if crimes lead to worldly greatness, they will not only be justified by mankind, but gain their admiration for the perpetrator. And the victories of that king, by elevating the English nobles to high commands over the cities and provinces of France, and tempting them to attribute such elevation to their own personal valour, had made them too proud to be governed by any law, but that of the strongest. The reader can scarcely have avoided observing one effect of their pride, in the perpetual recurrence of the ducal title in the history of this reign. For as it made them discontented with the possession of any rank, below the highest attainable by a subject, the ministers of Henry VI. had been induced to purchase the support of one noble after another, by raising them to dukedoms; till there were six times as many dukes as now, in proportion to the whole number of the nobility. Indeed it would not be too much to say, that, considering the relative wealth of the country, at the two periods, it would be as reasonable to have two hundred dukes at present; except that wealth is not now so very unequally distributed, as it was then. An extract from a letter written to the duke of York by his two elder sons, the earls of March and Rutland, soon after this, may serve to shew how miserably this ambition for grandeur must have broken in upon the happiness of domestic life; when two boys were expected to flatter their father's pride, by giving him pompous titles; instead of addressing him in the endearing language of hearty filial affection. "Ryght hiegh * and ryght myghty prince, oure ful redouted and ryght noble lorde and ffadur †," they begin, and these words are repeated in the same formal order, three times in this short letter; "as lowely with all our hertes as we your trewe and naturell ‡ sonnes can or may, we re-

* High.

† Father.

‡ i. e. by nature.

omaund us unto your noble grace, humbly besechyng our nobley * and worthy ffaderhode †, daily to geve ‡ us your hertely § blessing.—Overe|| this, yght noble lord and ffadur¶, please hit ** your highnesse to witte, that we have charged your servant to declare unto your nobley * certayne things on our behalf. Wherefore we beseche your gracious ordeship and full noble ffadurhood † to here †† him, and to his relacion to yeve ‡ ful feith and credence.” But alas for those nobles, whom the besetting sin of their age and country tempted to covet the dangerous elevation, so profusely bestowed! It is written, *The Lord will destroy the house of the proud ††; and in less than fourscore years there was not one of those ducal houses, which had not been destroyed. He that is of a proud heart, stirreth up strife §§: and, amongst such, wrath is cruel ||||*. Through mutual violence, and its bitter fruits, all had perished, they and their sons, by the sword, or by the axe of the executioner.

At an adjourned session of the parliament last mentioned, the commons petitioned the king to banish the duke of Somerset, the duchess of Suffolk, the lords Hastings and Dudley, and about twenty others, from his presence, for life; “because the people spoke evil of them.” To which he replied that, before such a sentence was passed against them, it ought to be seen whether any could truly lay aught criminal to the charge of those persons. On this the duke of York went off to his Welsh estates, to summon the tenantry of the Mortimers to arms, that he might compel the king to do what he had thus declined. But Henry, hearing of his preparations, marched immediately into the west, to meet him before he should grow stronger. The duke, however, skilfully avoided the royal army; and

* Nobility.	† Fatherhood.	‡ Give.	§ Hearty.
Over, i. e. besides.	¶ Father.	** It.	†† Hear.
‡‡ Prov. xv. 25.	§§ Ib. xxviii. 25.	Ib. xxvii. 4.	

hastening onwards crossed the Thames at Kingston, in the hope of being joined in Kent by those who had lately been in arms under Cade. But, by this time, the king had turned back after him; and reached Blackheath, while the Yorkists were encamped near Dartford. From thence the king sent Wainfleet, bishop of Winchester, to ask the duke of York why he was thus disturbing the peace of the country. To which he sent back this reply; that believing treachery to have been intended against himself, he had armed in his own defence; and must now demand, that the duke of Somerset should be sent to the tower; to take his trial for sundry grievous offences. To this the councillors about the king, thought it best he should assent. And then, the duke of York immediately dismissed his forces, and agreed to go unarmed and wait upon the king; who was still in his tent, and surrounded by his troops. He

Mar. 1,
1452. did so; but, whilst urging Henry to believe Somerset a faithless and mischievous minister, he was surprised by that nobleman's coming forward, from behind a curtain; whom he had been persuaded to suppose a prisoner in the tower.

The two enemies soon broke out into violent language; and the duke of Somerset is said to have urged the king to put York to death, as a traitor who sought his crown. Whilst the latter, conscious that he was now in the power of his foes, was compelled to ride to London, with the king; as in custody. That nothing worse befel him, was partly owing to Henry's averseness to all cruelty; and partly to the news which now came from France. For the inhabitants of Bourdeaux, who had of late been kept faithful to their English sovereigns by gentle treatment, were already impatient of the burdens imposed upon them by Charles VII., and had in consequence sent a message to Henry; that, if he would but supply them with troops, he might expect to recover not only their city, but the whole of Gascony.

Lord Talbot, now earl of Shrewsbury, and far advanced in years, was accordingly sent with 4000 men, and fought as bravely as ever ; till he was killed in battle by a cannon ball, and the French king became once more, and finally, master of Bourdeaux. But though the hopes of the English ministers were so soon disappointed in that quarter, their wish to be disencumbered of all quarrels at home, that they might send more troops thither, contributed towards inducing them to set the duke of York at liberty ; on the reasonable condition of his taking a solemn oath before the nobles and people assembled in St. Paul's church, to be an obedient and peaceable subject to king Henry. To this oath, he afterwards affixed his hand and seal, declaring it to be done of his own free-will. The following were its most important clauses :—“ I shall never hereafter take upon me to gather any rout, nor to make any assembly of your people, without your commandment or licence, or in my lawful defence. In interpretation or declaration of the which my lawful defence, I shall report me at all times to your highness : and if the case requires, to my peers ; nor any thing attempt against any of your subjects, of what estate, degree, or condition that they be. But whensoever I find myself wronged and aggrieved, I shall sue humbly for remedy to your highness ; and proceed after the course of your laws, and in none otherwise *.”

The earl of Shrewsbury's first successes had also enabled the court to procure a vote, for raising archers and money. Nor did it regret an act passed, at the same time, by parliament, for taking back all such gifts as had been made out of the royal demesnes, in the present reign, to any persons not powerful enough to get their acquisitions excepted

* In this document may be observed that old use of the word *shall*, still common with the Irish and Scotch, where in modern English, we say and write *will*. It is very common in the English Bible. See Matt. vi. 22, 23. Luke xii. 8. Gen. ii. 24.

by name. But in the midst of this smooth yet short interval, of peace at home, and prosperity abroad, the king was attacked, at Clarendon, ^{Oct. 1453.} by a disorder which deprived him of the use of his speech and understanding. The queen was very near her confinement, at the time ; being soon after delivered of her son Edward, the only child they ever had. As therefore it was evident that the nation would not consent to have the unpopular duke of Somerset made Protector, the necessity of the case induced all parties to concur in deferring to the duke of York's authority ; as the first prince of the blood royal. Whilst Somerset was committed by his own colleagues to the tower ; in the hope that this instance of submission might satisfy the anger of his not ill-tempered rival.

In the following spring died Cardinal Kemp, Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury ; and advantage was taken of his death to ascertain what was really the king's condition. The parliament had been summoned to meet before ; but was opened, after a decent delay, by the duke of York as royal commissioner ; and it ordered certain lords to wait on the king at Windsor, to ask whom he would be pleased to name for Kemp's successor. These lords were ^{Mar. 23, 1454.} admitted into the king's chamber ; but were unable to draw a word from his lips, or any sign that he was conscious of their presence. And, on their report, the house of peers elected the duke of York Protector ; to continue so during the king's pleasure, or till the infant prince should arrive at years of discretion.

The commons, on the other hand, had chosen Thomas Thorpe for their Speaker, a friend of the Beauforts. And the duke, to get rid of his hostile influence, had this gentleman arrested on a verdict for 2000*l.* damages ; which he obtained against him in the exchequer, for the seizure of some property at York house. It was in vain that the commons

petitioned for Thorpe's release: neither the judges nor the lords choosing to give answers favourable to their claim in his behalf. Under a new Speaker, the lower house consented to acts confirming the election which the lords had made; and the limitation they had assigned to the protectorate.

In nine months more, however, king Henry ^{Jan. 1455.} was himself again. And it is to the credit of the duke of York, that he made no difficulty of resigning his high office, forthwith; though he was to have the vexation of seeing the duke of Somerset again at large, and again in favour. But one of the king's first remarks on recovering his senses, had been, "I am in charity with all the world; and much I wish that all the lords were." And with this benevolent wish he prevailed on both these dukes to submit their differences to eight arbitrators: who were to give in their award by the twentieth of the following June. By another act of kindness, he promoted the two sons of his mother, the French princess, Catharine, by Owen Tudor, to the earldoms of Richmond and Pembroke: though her marriage had never been approved of by any party. And to the earl of Richmond he farther gave in marriage, that wealthy and important heiress, lady Margaret Beaufort; then a royal ward, and not ten years old.

Before, however, the day of the expected award had arrived, the duke of York, violating that oath he had taken in St. Paul's, had again raised an army of 3000 men: and was marching upon London, with the duke of Norfolk, and the earls of Salisbury and Warwick, in his company. Henry could now muster but 2000 men to oppose him, though eleven of the chief nobles of the land gathered round their sovereign; so little interest did the great body of the nation take, at this time, in the question, which party should govern their too easily led king.

On the 21st of May the little army of the royalists took up its quarters in St. Alban's; and on the

following morning the duke of York's forces were seen approaching. The duke of Buckingham immediately left the town to meet them ; and to ask the Yorkists what were their demands. He was answered, that they wished to pay no disrespect to the king ; so as he would but deliver up to them such persons as they had to accuse of sundry crimes, both against himself and them. But when this was communicated to Henry, he sent back, as his reply, a command, that they should instantly break up their camp, and depart, or expect to be dealt with as traitors ; adding this declaration, " Rather than they shall have any lord that is here with me, I shall this day for their sake, in this quarrel, live or die."

But the duke of York now knew himself to be the stronger. And various other temptations urged him to rush deeper into sin. He therefore led his men straightway to the attack of the town. St. Alban's had no walls. And, though the streets had been barricadoed, the earl of Warwick's troops got into the place ; through the passages leading from the townsmen's gardens. And in the confusion which followed his entering in their rear, the barriers were forced by the duke of York ; whose archers soon slew, or disabled so many of the chiefs of the king's army, at the head of their men in the narrow street before them, that the survivors presently retired, as if they had nothing left to combat for ; the duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, and the lord Clifford being already killed ; and the king himself, with the duke of Buckingham, the earls of Stafford and Dorset, and lord Sudely, wounded by arrows. The resistance, therefore, ceased, when the royal army had lost but a few men *. And the duke

* The widely varying accounts which have been given of the slaughter in this battle, fought at a place so accessible to the writers, may serve to show the caution necessary in receiving any statements of number found in our old chroniclers. Hall, who wrote about 100 years after this battle, says that 8000 men were killed on the king's side alone ; whilst it appears, on very good authority, that the numbers engaged on

of York then seeking out the king, who had taken refuge in the house of a tanner, knelt before him; and bade him rejoice that the traitor Somerset had received his deserts.

With his feelings thus insulted, but yet with all outward show of reverence, the king was the next day conducted to London; and compelled to reward his rebellious subjects by appointing the duke of York, high constable of England; and the earl of Warwick, governor of Calais. He was also obliged to give his assent to a declaration, made by them in parliament, that they had acted right in all they had done; and that the blame of the late engagement was due to the duke of Somerset, and to Thomas Thorpe and William Joseph, Esqrs. for having concealed from their sovereign the respectful letters which the duke of York asserted he had written to him. After this, the rebel lords chose to renew the solemn mockery of swearing, that "they would at no time will, or consent to, any thing which might, in any wise, be to the prejudice of king Henry's person, dignity, or estate." They thought by this

both sides could not have exceeded 5000 men, as stated above. On the other hand, a gentleman writing from London to his relations in Norfolk, about three days after the battle, puts down the king's loss at but ten score men; and altered that number with his pen to six score, on what he thought more correct information. And, whereas it would not have been unreasonable to suspect this letter-writer of thinking the destruction of the common men beneath notice, a list of the king's officers and soldiers buried has accidentally been preserved, which falls below even his statement; though it specifies four yeomen, and twenty-five persons whose names were unknown. The truth is, that though battles were ordinarily far more sanguinary then, than they have been since the general use of muskets has put an end to the old way of having, at least, the front of the two armies engaged hand to hand during most of the time the battle lasted; still, as this engagement took place in such a narrow street, as the entrance of an old English town usually was, in which a very few of the bravest knights, and greatest nobles, could fill up the front of the combatants; and as, the attack being only made on one side, those who thought the day lost would soon escape from the town at its other outlets; and lastly, as the duke of York had no object in urging his men to further carnage, after the nobles before him were fallen; we may hope the *bloodshed was not great.*

ceremony to keep up their character with the nation. But oaths call down, upon the swearers, the especial notice of a High and Holy Witness, who will not suffer His great name to be taken in vain.

After a short interval the poor king fell, once more, into a temporary state of idiotcy, and the duke of York was once more made protector, by the parliament; but with this new proviso, that he should not again be obliged to resign his office at the king's command; unless backed by the vote of the house of peers. And, to add still farther to the duke's influence, his brother-in-law, the earl of Salisbury, was made chancellor. But when Henry recovered, as he soon did, it appeared that his meekness had procured him the attachment of a sufficient number of his nobles and prelates, to constrain the duke to resign without a struggle.

Two more years followed, of comparative tranquillity; though it was then that the duke of York and the earls of Salisbury and Warwick, having met the king, by invitation, at Coventry, fled in haste from that city to their castles, spreading a report that queen Margaret had plotted to slay them. Still Henry's mild character, and his real anxiety to promote peace, brought the same lords afterwards to London; to hear his proposals for reconciling them to their opponents. They took care, however, to go attended by such bands of armed followers, that as the queen was also in the city with a strong retinue, whilst the gentle king remained, at some distance, in Berkhamstead castle, the mayor thought it necessary to have 5000 citizens in arms, to protect the tranquillity of the city; half of them keeping watch by day, and half by night. Unfavourable as these appearances were, the king was, at least, gratified by the appearance of an amicable reconciliation. All parties submitted to his award; which required his own friends to forgive, and the Yorkists

to make certain compensations to the widows of those slain at St. Alban's. On receiving their assent to these conditions, Henry joined his nobles in London, and walked in his robes to St. Paul's, the happiest of the stately party, because the sincerest in his goodwill to others; whilst the queen followed him, led by the duke of York; the young duke of Somerset, hand in hand with the earl of Salisbury; and the loyal duke of Exeter, with the earl of Warwick.

Mar. 25
1458.

There was an especial reason for the king's wishing to see the two last on good terms, as a little before he had injured his friend to win an enemy; depriving the duke of Exeter of the office of high admiral, to bestow it on the earl of Warwick; which, but for the former's giving way, would only have been throwing a bone of contention between them, since the patent by which the duke held it, had been made out for his life. As for the earl, every elevation he gained, had but the effect of tempting his ambition to more crimes. He had scarcely returned to his government at Calais, when he received information that a fleet of twenty-eight sail, sixteen of them large vessels, was beating up against the wind to pass the straits of Dovor; and, the very next morning, he put to sea with five large vessels full of soldiers, and seven smaller ones, to intercept them. They proved to be Spanish merchant men, bound for Lubeck: a city united with several other northern towns of Germany, in a great commercial confederacy, called the Hanseatic League. England was not then at war with Spain; and the Hanseatic League had long been connected in friendly alliance with our kings*; who found their advantage in encouraging those trading towns to establish factories in the English ports. But the earl of Warwick had before his eyes the value of the

* See p. 63.

spoil which would be his, as high admiral, if he could make these ships his prize. Hence, as the laws of chivalry attached no disgrace to such an act of piracy, he set upon them, with the same indifference to right or wrong, as a highwayman might be expected to show. The Spaniards having the more ships, but much less fully manned, lost such vessels as the earl's captains could board; but recovered some of them again, as soon as the conquerors had tacked about to make other captures. So that after a struggle, obstinately kept up from four in the morning till ten, the earl was glad to draw off with six prizes, and seek the shelter of Calais harbour; his own little fleet having sustained a considerable loss in men, both killed and prisoners.

Against this piratical attack upon property, chiefly belonging to them, the Lubeckers made such urgent complaints to the English government, that the earl of Warwick was summoned to London; to give the king's councillors an account of his conduct. And it so happened that whilst he was thus engaged, in attendance before the court, one of his servants quarrelled with a servant of the king; and, having wounded him, fled away. The clamour brought a number of the wounded man's fellow-menials to the spot; and the earl himself, quitting the council at that moment to enter his barge, on the Thames, they so beset him with swords and spits that, having but few attendants about his person, he was very near losing his life in this inglorious fray. Whilst brooding over this, and half doubting whether some enemy of higher rank had not set these people upon him, he heard that the queen had procured an order for his being arrested, and sent to the Tower; as guilty of having drawn his sword within the precincts of the court. And upon this intelligence he withdrew in haste to Warwick castle, to communicate his anger to his father and the duke of York; and prepare with them a fresh rebellion.

Hitherto these struggles, between the great, had interfered but little with the general state of the nation. The insurgent nobles, and those who rallied round the king, having been equally unable to induce many, besides their own tenantry, to arm in their support. Hence, notwithstanding the disadvantages of a weak government, the country was far from being altogether in an unprosperous state, as to the wealth, and means of enjoyment within the reach of the largest part of its inhabitants. Of the six and thirty years that the present reign had lasted, there were but a few during which the nation had allowed itself to be at all heavily taxed for the French war. We have seen that, during the greater part of the reign, the ministers of the crown had not even been able to draw from parliament enough to pay its annual expenses; and yet this was not from their being immoderate*. The result had been, that commanders who had laid out their own money, to secure troops for that war, were still unpaid; and that the gentry had grown weary of serving in it, as soon as they could no longer pay themselves by the plunder of hostile provinces. Whilst if many of the English commonalty had been allowed to throw away their lives in unprofitable campaigns, they had paid the penalty of their own greediness for spoil and love of violence; but their removal had tended to keep food cheaper and wages higher, at home. Hence a statute of labourers, passed in 1446, though meant to compel the labouring man to accept lower wages than he might otherwise have obtained, yet fixed their pay at about double the rate prescribed by a similar law made sixty years before. By the act of 1446, a farming bailiff was to have 2*l.* 6*s.* a year, and 10*s.* for clothes; the carter, or head shepherd, 2*l.* a year, and 8*s.* for clothes; and a common servant of husbandry was

* In 1449, the ordinary revenue of the crown had been allowed to fall as low as 9500*l.* a year.

to have 1*l.* 10*s.* a year, and 6*s.* 6*d.* for clothing; each having also his diet. Whilst the day labourer was to have threepence a day from Michaelmas to Easter, and 4*d.* from Easter to Michaelmas, with an additional penny for harvest work; a mower 8*d.*; and a reaper or carter 6*d.* And if they were not found in meat and drink, there was to be an additional allowance of threepence a day, at ordinary times, and of 4*d.* in the harvest.

Two years before this act was passed, a quarter of wheat might be had for 8*s.* 6*d.* and a fat ox for 3*l.* 3*s.* But cattle were then so much smaller, than since their improvement has been more attended to, that these three guineas purchased little more than half the quantity of meat now had for the price of an ox. And wheat fluctuated so much in value* that the safest way of estimating the real worth of these money wages, is by comparing the sums specified with what the same law presumed to be a reasonable compensation for the labourer's victuals and drink. Chief justice Fortescue, describing the happiness of subjects whose governors have not authority to impose taxes at their will, speaks of the English peasantry under his sovereign, Henry VI., as very much better off, at this time, both in diet and clothing, than their neighbours the French. But his account of their proneness to crimes of violence, only adds to our admiration of the long-suffering of God, who smote them not sooner for their sins. "It hath been often seen in England," says he, "that three or four thieves have set upon seven or eight true men, and robbed them all. Whereas

* In 1455 the farmers could not procure more than 2*s.* a quarter for their wheat, and 2*s.* 10*d.* for malt. Perhaps the fear that the battle of St. Alban's; the first in which the duke of York went so far as to combat troops commanded by the king in person, would be immediately followed by much more lawless violence, and by a civil war throughout the kingdom, may have led to a temporary secreting of money, just after the harvest of that year; which would have the effect of lowering the prices of commodities to sums under their proper value.

it is right seldom that Frenchmen be hanged for robbery ; for that they have no hearts to do so terrible an act. But the Englishman is of another courage ; for if he be poor, and see another man having riches, which may be taken from him by might, he will not spare to do so. There be therefore more men hanged in England in a year, for robbery and manslaughter, than there be hanged in France, for such cause of crime, in seven years. There is no man hanged in Scotland in seven years together for robbery ; and yet they be oftentimes hanged for larceny, and stealing of goods in the absence of the owner thereof ; but their hearts serve them not to take a man's goods, while he is present and will defend it ; which manner of taking is called robbery." Thus did this judge express the gratification his national pride made him find, in the courage with which his countrymen could venture on offences, forbidden by the laws he had to administer, no less than by those of God. And till men are brought to assent, with their whole heart, to our Saviour's first declaration in his sermon on the mount, that *Blessed are the poor in spirit* *, they will admire bravery in sin ; though they may not have the indiscretion to confess their feelings, in the undisguised language of this old writer.

The woollen manufacture introduced by Edward III. had also thriven so considerably, of late, in Norfolk and Suffolk, as to produce goods rivalling the Flemish for texture. Hence those countries were become the richest in England ; and wealth had made their tradesmen as quarrelsome as their superiors in rank. In their case, however, the parliament endeavoured to remedy the evil, by a curious law, setting forth that " whereas, not long past, there were not more than six or eight attornies in those parts, in which times great tranquillity reigned

* Matt. v. 3.

there ; but now there be more than fourscore attornies, who attend at fairs and markets, exhorting, procuring, moving, and inciting the people to suits for small trespasses ; there shall be henceforth but six attornies for Suffolk, six for Norfolk, and two for Norwich."

As to foreign commerce ; our trade with France had of course been much reduced ; and the French ships had latterly pillaged and burnt one or two unfortified towns on the opposite English coast. Whilst the trade carried on by foreign merchants resorting to England, must have been much checked, and they must have sold their goods dearer to Englishmen than they might otherwise have been obtained, in consequence of several absurd laws passed in this reign ; from mistaken notions of what would be profitable to the country. By one of these laws, Englishmen were forbidden to sell any merchandize to a foreigner ; but for ready payment in money, or goods. By another, the foreign merchant was forbidden to sell his merchandize to another foreigner, under pain of forfeiting it to the king—nor might he make any bargain with any person, but in the presence of an English tradesman, to be appointed by the mayor of the port, and allowed twopence in the pound on all his contracts ; nor might he keep his goods eight months unsold, under pain of their forfeiture ; nor ask gold in payment ; and, the price he obtained was to be registered by the inspecting tradesman, and was all to be laid out again in articles the produce of England : excepting a moderate sum for his personal expences. From all these last restrictions, however, the merchants of the Hanseatic League were exempted, by a special clause in the law ; and altogether the commerce between England and the north of Europe had been increasing. Whilst in the south, we have evidence that an English ship belonging to a Bristol merchant, of the name of Sturmy, had been this year as far as the

Levant. For it was captured there ; and, this act of piracy being attributed to the Genoese, all the merchants of that nation were arrested in the king's name, till they had given security to pay 7500*l.* as compensation. But Sturmyn's fellow-townsmen, William Canning, five times mayor of Bristol, was probably the greatest English merchant of this age. We find him at one time obtaining recommendatory letters from Henry VI., for two of his factors in Prussia ; and, at another, a license to send two ships to Iceland and Finmark, to take in goods there, for debts already due to him from subjects of the king of Denmark. And when, in the next reign, this wealthy man was charged with acts of piracy, the king took from him 2470 tons of shipping, whereof one was a vessel of 900 tons burthen ; in lieu of a fine of 4000*l.*

The years which had passed since the English ceased to gain ground in France, dishonourable as they were deemed by the nation, had certainly raised the bulk of the people into far easier circumstances than the victorious reign of Henry V. had left them in. But there was, still, much to be done, to put its different classes in possession of various comforts, now enjoyed by all except the very poorest. The luxurious noble, who, sitting down to dinner at ten in the morning, wasted the three next, and best hours of the day, at table, was obliged to pull his meat with his fingers, for the want of a fork ; and was very scantily supplied with table linen. And as for their houses, the quarrying and conveying of stone, if not close at hand, was too expensive for private gentlemen, who, taking much of their rents in kind, had little ready money ; and the making of bricks, though practised in this island by the Romans, had been a forgotten art till the reign of Richard II., and was still but rarely practised ; so that though the treasurer, lord Cromwell*, had

* See page 502.

lately built two remarkable edifices of brick, Wingfield manor house, in Derbyshire, and Tattershall castle in Lincolnshire, the gentry lived in wooden houses, or tenements of lath and plaister; and chimneys were only to be seen in a monastery, or a baronial castle. The tradesman had horn instead of glass for his best window; and lattice, or wicker-work, in the others, to let out the smoke. The countryman, dressed in woollen, or a tanned skin, had no shirt to his back; nor indeed had many, richer than he. And, at night, all but the affluent lay on straw pallets, without a sheet beneath them, if they had one over their bodies; and with a round log of wood for a pillow. But, instead of farther improvements, the progress of all peaceable occupations was now most grievously checked, by the contagious diffusion of the spirit of strife.

There had been no parliament called for the last three years; the political chiefs of both parties seeming to have resolved, that the sword should decide which must submit to the other. Whilst more impartial observers had become convinced, that the duke of York's claim to the throne, though not yet publicly urged by himself, was in fact the real source of his restlessness under the government of the gentle king; and that there could, therefore, be no permanent tranquillity till it was either conceded to him, or his party reduced to despair of seeing him obtain it. Hence the armies now raised, for a fresh struggle, were joined by far greater numbers than had ever swelled their ranks before; the support of each side being no longer confined to partizans, interested in a personal quarrel.

During the spring of 1459, the earl of Salisbury was busily engaged in collecting forces about his castle, at Middleham in Yorkshire. The duke of York was similarly employed, in Herefordshire and Shropshire. And the earl of Warwick had returned to Calais, as an advantageous station for drawing

round him the veteran soldiers who had served in the French wars; and of whom a large number joined him under Sir Andrew Trollope, one of their old commanders. Whilst, on the other side, letters were sent, under the king's privy seal, desiring the persons addressed, to meet their sovereign at Leicester by the 10th of May, with as many followers defensively armed as befitted their rank; and to bring with them enough for their expences for two months. And to show that she regarded her son's inheritance as aimed at by the duke of York, queen Margaret distributed, among the king's friends, collars ornamented with silver swans; the badge she had chosen for the infant prince of Wales. Such badges had long been in use, to distinguish the servants, or tenantry, of the lord, whom fancy or policy, had led to fix upon them. And when the great nobles were forbidden to bestow their liveries on any but their menials*, they contrived to elude the spirit of that law, by giving their badge to every gentleman who would accept, and wear it, as a pledge of his willingness to support the giver in any time of need. A red rose had been the badge of the first earls of Lancaster; and, as Henry IV. had chosen to found one of his claims to the crown upon his descent from those earls†, the reigning house of Lancaster adopted it as their own. Now it so happened that the badge of the Mortimers was a white rose; and as the opposite claim of the duke of York was derived from his being their heir at law, he selected this, from all the badges used by his different ancestors, for his favorite. Hence the wars between the Lancastrians and the Yorkists, are popularly known by the name of *the wars of the roses*. And these badges, being hailed, or feared, as the signs of life or death, in the field of battle, became so interwoven with the strongest passions of men in every rank,

* See page 391.

† See pages 115. 388.

that the red or the white rose, according to the party of the possessor or patron, were embossed on their armour, carved on their furniture, and painted in the windows, and sculptured in profusion on the walls of castles, colleges, and even of churches.

Notwithstanding, however, the open manner in which each party was engaged for several months in preparing for war, the summer had drawn to a close, before the earl of Salisbury moved down from the north to join the duke of York. On his way, he was met, upon Bloreheath in Staffordshire, by the lord Audley, at the head of a royalist army of double his number; and defeated him, by pretending to fly before him, till lord Audley and half his men had crossed a deep stream in pursuit, and thus separated themselves from their friends, when the earl's army turned round, and slew him, with 2000 of his followers.

Proceeding onwards, after this victory, the earl of Salisbury effected his junction with the duke of York at Ludlow; a few days before the earl of Warwick also arrived there. To keep the people from opposing his march, the latter had dispersed proclamations declaring his personal respect for the king; of whom he professed to believe, that "from his own blessed conversation and noble disposition, he graciously applied himself to the common weal:" wherefore, he said, the combined lords desired only "to go into his presence, and lowly to beseech him to vouchsafe to redeem his land from jeopardy, by the advice of the great lords of his blood." Edward of Caernarvon, or Richard II. would not have been thus spoken of, by the nobles who took up arms against their government. Such language, used for such a purpose, is evidence that the earl of Warwick thought the king's benevolent character had given him a strong hold on the esteem of his subjects, in despite of his too manifest incapacity for governing. Their loyalty had now supplied him

with an army said to amount to 60,000 men; a multitude which could not traverse even a friendly country, without spreading ruin around it, when no magazines were formed to supply an army's wants, no moveable stores to attend its march; and when, consequently, cattle and provisions must have been seized by the soldiery for their daily food, wherever they could be found.

Happily, however, the campaign proved a short one. As soon as the king arrived in the neighbourhood of Ludlow, he sent offers of pardon into the rebel camp, for any who would lay down their arms. And the duke of York saw such reason for fearing that his men would shrink from combating their sovereign, that, on the eve of an expected battle, he suborned false witnesses to swear before them, that the king was suddenly dead; and made his chaplains go through the profane mockery of chaunting masses for his departed soul. It may well be imagined that this deceit was too gross to impose upon his officers; and Sir Andrew Trollope now learning, for the first time, that the duke had confessed himself bent on seizing the crown, went over with his veterans, at dusk, to Henry's camp; having Oct. 14. never intended to aid the combined lords in doing so much more than the earl of Warwick had assured him they meant. This defection spread such distrust and alarm among the Yorkists that their chiefs fled that very night towards the Welsh mountains; lest they should be apprehended and carried before the king by their own men. From thence the duke sailed to Ireland; whilst his eldest son, Edward earl of March, escaped with the lords Salisbury and Warwick to the Devonshire coast, and then, by sea, to Calais. The duchess of York with her two younger sons, of whom one was afterwards king Richard III. were still in Ludlow, when the royal army entered it; and were placed by the king in easy custody, under the charge of her sister the

duchess of Buckingham. Lord Grey of Ruthin had remained to throw himself on the king's mercy, and was freely forgiven.

The benevolent Henry was delighted at finding that he had gained a complete victory without bloodshed, and when the lords of his party met in
 Nov. a parliament at Coventry *, and passed acts declaring his late adversaries guilty of treason, and their estates in consequence forfeited to the crown, he insisted that a clause should be added, reserving to him the power of annulling these sentences, whenever he should think proper.

But though driven from England, the adverse chiefs were not subdued. The duke of York had never resigned the governorship of Ireland. And on his appearance in Dublin, he was hailed there with joy, as if come to remedy all the ills that neglected country had suffered from the inability of his deputies to controul the violence of its lawless inhabitants, whether of English or Irish extraction. He listened to their sad tale of quarrels between the Butlers and Fitz-geralds ; of seven score villages and towns burnt in one season, in Kildare and Meath, by the partisans of the former ; and of the English pale † being so wasted and diminished, that Dublin could scarcely be provisioned from it. But when the Duke heard their complaints with courteous attention, he was only seeking to secure the popularity needful to gain his own private ends. And he succeeded in his aim. The Irish parliament assumed a right to declare him irremoveable from the

* It may easily be supposed that the elections for a parliament called together at such a time would be but irregularly conducted. And it seems that in order to secure a favourable house of commons, the Queen had letters sent to sheriffs of preceding years, desiring them to return, and in fact to name, the members ; where her friends had no confidence in the actual sheriff.

† A name used to distinguish that part of Ireland which professed to obey the king's governor ; and to receive the laws passed in the Anglo-Irish parliament.

office of governor, for ten years to come ; and passed a law making it high-treason for any person to attempt enforcing the king of England's writ, or any order under his privy seal, against any one whose enemies might have driven him to seek shelter in Ireland. And to confirm them in their resolution to neglect any orders which might be issued against him by the English court, the duke encouraged the same parliament further to declare, that Ireland had as independent a government as England, under a common king ; that the grand constable and marshal of Ireland had a right to determine all appeals, or criminal charges, arising within it ; and that no person could be compelled by any command, not being under the great seal of Ireland, to answer any charge made against him out of that country.

The earl of Warwick, in the mean while, had been pursued by the dukes of Somerset and Exeter ; appointed to succeed him in the respective commands of Calais and the fleet. But when they would have made an attack on the town of Calais, their sailors carried the ships into its harbour to join instead of combating the earl ; who was popular with them for his criminal readiness to lead them on against friends and foes alike, to seize on spoil. And when the duchess of Bedford's husband, Wydvile, lately made lord Rivers, had collected some vessels in the Downs, to watch the earl, the sailors in the service of the latter surprised his lordship in his bed, at Sandwich, and carried him and his son Anthony prisoners to Calais ; where they were brought by torchlight, into the presence of the earls of March, Warwick, and Salisbury ; and abused by them, in no measured language, for presuming, so lately ennobled as they were, to give the name of traitors, in the king's council, " to the Lords of the king's blood." They little foresaw that the friendly connexion which should, a few years afterwards, unite the blood of the Wydviles with that of the noblest of those who

stood there, would prove alike fatal to them and to every one of the princely earls who thus insulted over them; or to their children.

In a few months more their command of the sea enabled these earls to carry over 1500 men
 June 5, 1460. unopposed to the coast of Kent; a number so small, that it cannot be imagined they would have risked their own persons with it, had they not known that Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, intended to join them, as he immediately did. The men of Kent, always ripe for rebellion in this age, were not slow to follow the archbishop's example; so that the Yorkists reached London 40,000 strong, and were admitted into the city, though lord Scales kept the Tower for the King. Five more bishops here joined the army, thus advancing to combat a sovereign, whose punctual observance of every duty prescribed by their church, and whose reverential attachment to its ministers, it is probable that no man in his kingdom exceeded. Having marched northward, they found Henry encamped under the walls of Northampton; where the Queen harangued the royal army, and promised liberal rewards to all who should distinguish themselves in their king's defence.

The camp was strongly fortified with high ramparts and deep trenches, filled with stakes and loose thorns and briars. But the attack upon it
 July 10. had scarcely been begun by the Yorkists, when lord Grey of Ruthin, so lately forgiven by Henry, bade his men reach out their hands and help the earl of Warwick's soldiers to ascend that portion of the rampart entrusted to his defence. Thus admitted, and immediately followed by young Edward, earl of March, lord Warwick charged his party to spare the commons, but cut down the gentlemen; whose fall would ensure the flight of the rest. He was obeyed; and there soon fell, on the royal side, the duke of Buckingham; the earl of Shrews-

bury; the viscount Beaumont*; Percy, lord Egremont; and 300 knights and esquires. The victors found the king in his tent; sitting alone; and lamenting the madness which could drive men to shed each other's blood, for the vain objects of ambition. His more active queen had escaped, and carried off the prince her son; with whom she reached Scotland, by a circuitous flight; after having been robbed of her money and jewels in Lancashire, by persons of her own household.

The earl of March now sent for his father, the duke of York. And king Henry was compelled to accompany the triumphant rebels to London, though treated with as much outward respect as ever; the earl of Warwick riding bare headed before him, and carrying his sword of state, as they entered the city in formal procession. He was farther obliged to fill the great offices of state with such persons as his conquerors chose; Warwick's younger brother, George Nevile, bishop of Exeter†, being made chancellor; whilst archbishop Bourchier was rewarded, for the part he had taken, by having his brother made treasurer. A new parliament was also summoned; but still the duke of York did not appear; having chosen to delay his arrival, till it had sat long enough to repeal the acts passed against his party, at Coventry. When that had been done, he came riding through the city to Westminster, with a retinue of 500 horsemen; and entering the house of Lords, he passed on to the throne; and stood for awhile, with his hand upon its

* The first English nobleman, on whom the title of viscount, holding a middle rank between that of earl and baron, had been conferred.

† Under the old pretence of looking out before hand for a fit pastor for such a flock, the Pope had made this young gentleman Bishop of Exeter when but twenty-three years of age. And the powerful interest of his family had induced the government to acquiesce in this direct violation of the statute of provisors; so that the pope got the large fees he usually demanded as the wages of his sin, in making such appointments; and the young bishop the revenues of the see; whilst no man cared for the souls of his unhappy flock.

cushion, as though waiting to be invited to occupy it. But all around were silent, till turning away he bowed to his peers; and then applauses were heard. On this the archbishop of Canterbury ventured to ask if he would visit the king, who was in an adjoining apartment; but the duke replied with unusual haughtiness, "I know no one in this realm, who ought not rather to visit me." And, on leaving the house, he took possession of those chambers in the palace, which were ordinarily appropriated to the king's own use.

On a following day, the duke put a written claim to the crown of England into the hands of his wife's nephew, the chancellor, desiring it might be laid before the peers; and that his counsel might be heard in defence of his rights; as the lineal descendant and heir of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the elder brother of that duke of Lancaster whose children had usurped the throne. He farther required a speedy decision. But the house of peers still contained a sufficient number of friends to the king, and of independent members, to make the majority do their duty, as judges, with a truly dignified moderation. And it is no more than justice to the mitred abbots to observe, that the propriety with which its proceedings were conducted on this important occasion, was, in all probability, due to their share in its debates. For, being ecclesiastics, they had little need to dread the vindictive swords of the party they might displease; and having been elected abbots by their fellow monks, they were more rarely of noble families than the bishops. So that their natural inclination to support the cause of a king, who was the sincere friend of their order, being neither suppressed from excessive terror, nor warped aside by the bonds of relationship, their numerous votes formed a beneficial counterpoise to the overhearing power of the victorious Yorkists among the lay lords.

The first answer which the house of peers re-

turned to the duke was; that no subjects could debate such a question without the king's command. Having made him this reply, they waited on Henry, to know his will; and he desired them to search for just objections against the claims of the duke. "But you know," said he, "that my father was king; and his father was also king. I have worn the crown nearly forty years, from my cradle. You have all sworn fealty to me, as your sovereign; and your fathers have done the like to my fathers. How then can my right to be disputed!" Such an answer suited the plain, honest mind of king Henry. And it was a very sufficient answer; unless to those who chuse to maintain that the succession to kingdoms, and the transfer of authority over men, must be determined by the rules which settle the descent of a farm and the property in its cattle; notwithstanding the acquiescence of more than one generation of the people to be governed in a different arrangement; and notwithstanding their having pledged their oaths to maintain it. But a just retribution was now coming upon the house of Lancaster. When the king's grandfather, Henry IV., attempted to justify his seizing Richard's crown, by a false insinuation, that he himself was the true heir to Henry III.,* he wished the nation to think that though Richard had worn the crown from his childhood, and his father's father before him, yet neither this, nor the acquiescence of the people for several generations, could give Richard a right superior to that of the heir at law. And when the king's father, Henry V., attempted to justify his invading the kingdom of France, by falsely asserting that he himself was the true heir through Edward III., to a French monarch † dead a hundred years before, he taught the English nobility to think that there was no guilt in deluging France with blood to enforce his rights

* See page 388.

† Compare pp. 432, 180, 181.
B b 4

as heir at law; though Charles VI. had worn the crown near forty years, from his boyhood, and his fathers had been kings before him for three generations. Hence every battle Henry V. had fought and gained, had served to prepare the minds of his subjects for allowing that the duke of York had an indefeasible right to demand the crown of England from his son, and to enforce his right by arms. When therefore the peers, desiring to do their duty towards the king, sent for the judges, and required them to state the law arguments in favour of his title to the crown, it is not to be wondered that they answered, it should rather be debated by the house itself, as an affair of state. For otherwise they must have spoken against notorious precedents; as well as run the risk of being deprived of their posts by the duke of York, who was evidently coming into power. The king's serjeant-at-law and attorney were next desired to attend; and would equally have shrunk from interference, but that the peers insisted they should perform their duty, as the appointed defenders of the crown, in questions of law. After hearing them, the peers sent the duke a statement of their own objections to his claim; to which he was allowed to reply by his counsel. And Oct. 24. then, the house finally determined, that the justice of the duke of York's claim to the inheritance of the crown, could not be denied; but that to save their oath of fidelity, taken to Henry VI., it was their wish to pass a bill, securing the crown to him, for his life; and settling the succession to it on the duke, and the heirs of the house of York. To an act thus drawn up, the king gave his formal assent. And the duke and his son, the earl of March, swore in return, that they would not only abstain from attempting to deprive Henry of the crown, but that they would defend him in the possession of it. The parliament then further proceeded to declare it high treason to compass the duke's death. And

king Henry rode in state to St. Paul's, attended by the duke, in quality of heir-apparent, to offer up thanksgivings for this termination of the civil war.

But though Henry had thus made no difficulty of surrendering the rights of his own son, the stronger affection and the warmer passions of the boy's mother, would not allow her to acquiesce in his being thus disinherited. She had no sooner heard the decision of parliament, than she quitted Scotland with the young prince, to give the earl of Northumberland, and the lords Clifford and Dacre, the sanction of their presence, for collecting an army to rescue the king from the hands of the Yorkists. And, whilst they were raising the north of England, the duke of Somerset, and Courtney, earl of Devonshire, advanced to join them with a large force, raised in their respective counties. So that the duke of York and lord Salisbury thought it prudent to hasten down into Yorkshire, with 6000 men ready for action, to check the progress of these Lancastrian lords; directing the earl of March to follow them, as soon as he could muster the numbers with which Kent and their western estates would shortly supply him. By Christmas the duke of York had reached his own strong castle of Sendal, near Wakefield.

The queen's forces were at hand; and three times as numerous as the Yorkists. But the duke was unable to bear the idea of having himself and his brave soldiers pent up within walls, to seek shelter from a woman's anger. He encamped his men therefore between Sendal castle and the town; and sent the Lancastrians word that they might fix their day, and he would fight them. His challenge was gladly accepted by his enemies; and they appointed a near day for the combat. But, in the interval, the Yorkists were observed to roam to distances for forage, and to keep a careless watch. So the duke of Somerset was tempted to forfeit the pledged honour of his party; and to march the queen's army to an im-

Decem. 30. mediate attack on their enemy's camp. It was bravely met; but the superiority of numbers allowed him nearly to surround his opponents. And in less than an hour the duke of York and the earl of Salisbury were prisoners; and nearly half their followers slain.

The young earl of Rutland had been hurried off the field, by a priest, his tutor, to find protection in Wakefield; but was overtaken on the bridge by lord Clifford; who, noticing his costly dress, seized hold of him, and demanded who he was. The poor boy, speechless from terror, fell on his knees, instead of replying. But the priest cried out, "Save him! He is the son of a prince, who may well repay you." "The son of York," shouted the merciless lord Clifford; "thy father slew mine; and so will I thee, and all thy kin;" and instantly buried his dagger in the heart of the helpless boy.

The treatment which the duke himself was, at the same time undergoing, shows that he had fallen into the hands of persons who, having heard how their Saviour was insulted by wicked men, had learnt from it, not to shudder at the guilt of His persecutors, but to imitate their cruel mockings. For they bade the duke of York sit down on an ant-hill, for his throne; and made a crown of weeds for his head; and then, bowing, as if to do him homage, they cried out, "Hail king, without a kingdom! hail prince, without a people!" After which they struck off his head; and lord Clifford, coming up, had it put on a pole, and thus presented it to queen Margaret; telling her, "Madam, your war is done. Here is the ransom of your king." She received the barbarous present with a laugh, but ordered it to be sent to York. And there this head, which had so coveted to be honoured of men, was placed over Micklegate Bar, with that of the earl of Salisbury; who, though spared on the field of battle, had been executed at Pomfret, a few days after it. How

pitiab!e is the narrow mindedness of the worldly great, who thus make to themselves wearying cares and ever changing toils, often leading to the like bitter fall, in the pursuits of *a corruptible crown*, whilst their thoughts have been too much chained to the earth, to let them look up to the offered hope of *an incorruptible crown* * ; which, had they but as zealously sought it, would have been freely given to happy cares, and such sweet toils as can make even of tribulation a well-spring of joy †!

But, strange as it should seem, ambition never leads one man to his ruin, without adding to the strength of the like temptation in another's breast, instead of awakening him to a conviction of its folly. By the death of the duke of York, his son Edward, earl of March, succeeded to the claims of their family. He was scarcely of man's estate; being only nineteen years of age. But instead of resigning those ambitious projects which he saw that his father's experience and skill both in council and in war, had not prevented from becoming his ruin, the young earl grasped at the hope of reaching the English crown sooner than the duke had stipulated for its possession. The desire too of avenging the murder of his father, and of his harmless brother Rutland, added to the spirit with which he pushed forward his preparations for renewing the campaign. Whilst the disgust the nation felt, at hearing of English nobles slain without trial, after their surrender in battle; and by the orders, as they supposed, of a queen who had always been unpopular; proved justly prejudicial to the cause of those, who had committed, or sanctioned such crimes; and disposed the people to excuse Edward's ridding himself of powerful adversaries by the like lawless means. For so natural is the love of revenge to the unrenewed man, that it excites no horror, unless it be deemed excessive.

* 1 Cor. ix. 25.

† Rom. v. 3.

The earl of March was at Gloucester, when the news of the battle of Wakefield reached him; and by the end of January the numbers there added to his army from the old estates of the Mortimers, had swelled his force to 20,000 men, with whom he moved to intercept the Queen's army, now advancing towards London. But finding himself closely followed by a mixed crowd, rather than an army, of Welsh and Irish, under the respective commands of Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, the king's half brother, and of Butler, earl of Ormond, an Irish nobleman, he turned back upon them, and

Feb. 1,
1461. brought them to an engagement; their numbers were much inferior to his own, and the spot where they met gave him an advantage in the superstition of his soldiers; for a cross, erected by one of the Mortimers, stood nigh. It so happened too, that a particular position of the clouds, which has occasionally produced the like effect elsewhere, reflected two images of the sun upon a fog; so that there seemed to be three suns rising at once. The images disappeared as usual in such cases, by moving towards, and uniting with, the true sun, which thus soon remained alone in the heavens. Edward, full of thoughts of the greatness of his own family, interpreted what passed before him to be a representation of the honors which once seemed likely to gild the future course of the late duke of York, and earl of Rutland, but were now to centre in himself; who should pursue a royal career, triumphantly. When, therefore, he had won the day, as he easily did, he sought to perpetuate the remembrance of the battle of Mortimer's cross, and of the hopes there encouraged, by wearing, thenceforward, the white rose of the Mortimers, painted as encircled by the rays of the sun. It would have been more correct to have had it painted as stained with spots of blood, for near 4000 of the Welsh and Irish had been slain; and Owen Tudor, the husband of Henry

the fifth's widow Catharine *, being taken prisoner in the fight, was beheaded, by the earl's order, at Hereford.

About a fortnight later the earl of Warwick and the duke of Norfolk quitted London, with king Henry in their keeping, and advanced to meet the Queen at St. Albans, without waiting to be reinforced by Edward's army. There fifty thousand Englishmen were matched in battle against each other, in nearly equal numbers; many a soldier taking the chance that his arrow might pierce the heart of a friend or of a benefactor, in the adverse ranks; or that his hand might deal the death-blow to a combatant, whom, when the visor of his helmet should be lifted up, he might discover to have been a kinsman; possibly a brother, or a parent. The battle raged at once in the heart of the town, and on a heath along the Barnet-road; but the great mass of the Yorkists fled, before the carnage had been great, without having struck a blow. The king himself was found, at the close of the engagement, as before, alone; and being led to the queen, in lord Clifford's tent, he embraced her and the prince of Wales, his son, with the joy of sincere affection. On the queen's side the only person of note, who had fallen, was a son-in-law of lord Rivers, Sir John Grey, of whose widow we shall hear more anon. To the deaths in battle, however, the queen again added the execution of two prisoners of rank; the lord Bonville, who had been the first man to shed blood in this unhappy strife between *the roses*; and old Sir Thomas Kyriel †.

As soon as the battle was ended, the abbot of St. Albans sought out the king; and implored him to use his little influence, to save the town from being pillaged by the queen's victorious troops;

* See p. 512.

† See p. 527.

but her soldiers from the north, said that they had been promised permission to spoil the country, as soon as they should have crossed the Trent; and they must and would have the plunder. They had probably no other pay; and on the line of their march, they had neither spared monasteries nor churches; but had laid the country as waste as the old men, who now saw themselves thus robbed, could remember having desolated France. In truth, though the gentry and some of the yeomanry might engage in these civil wars from their love of right or of party, it was the desire to indulge in such licenced robbery which chiefly filled the ranks of either army. And it was perhaps, the result of this very campaign, one of the most sanguinary in these wars, that John Rouse, a writer of that age, could count up sixty villages and hamlets in the neighbourhood of his native town of Warwick, which had been destroyed and abandoned.

But whilst the Lancastrians were rejoicing in their victory, the earl of Warwick had again collected his routed troops, and had effected a junction with the victorious Edward. And assuredly both the desire of revenge, and the need of obtaining food and protection in their distress, would drive the whole male population of the plundered districts to join their army. They came on, therefore, with such a superior force, that the Queen, after she had issued a vain order for the arrest of the earl of Warwick, and had threatened London to no purpose, was fain to retire once more into the north.

The united earls did not immediately pursue her retreating army. The unscrupulous ambition of Edward was encouraged by Warwick; and nobles of less weight were ready to follow him all lengths. They advanced, therefore, straight to London; and Edward was hailed with joy by its citizens, as their deliverer from the northern robbers. They saw in him a handsome youth, with a courtly air, and

popular manners ; a conqueror too ; and the victory of Mortimer's cross was the more thought of, when the experienced duke of York, and the valiant earl of Warwick, from whom more might have been expected, had just received such signal defeats from the Lancastrians. Hence the gentry and populace assembled to witness a muster of 4000 men under lord Falconberg, in the fields of Clerkenwell, listened with attention to that lord ; when he spoke to them plainly of Henry's inability to govern, of the high qualities and just claims of the heir of the house of York. And when Nevile, bishop of Exeter, addressing them in his turn, did not scruple to suggest that they should care no longer for the oaths of allegiance which he and they had taken to Henry VI., they shouted their applause of his rebellious and sinful language ; and cries of *Long live king Edward*, told the earl of March that his ambition might proceed unchecked. The next day, therefore, he assembled his friends in council, and riding with them in procession to St. Paul's, he was proclaimed by the heralds, as " King Edward, of that name the fourth." With an increasing retinue he next went to Westminster ; and in the House of Lords, and again in the church, he explained in a speech, which was warmly cheered, the right to the throne, which he claimed to have ; as heir-
March 4.
at-law to their former kings. And then putting the crown on his own head, he received the homage of the nobles and prelates of his party.

As the continued superiority of the Yorkists led to the assembling of Parliament, and the passing of laws under Edward IV., dated from this day, it has been usual with historians to consider the reign of Henry VI., as now brought to a close ; though Henry was at the time in Yorkshire, neither consenting to, nor for some days aware of, the decision thus rapidly made against his rights, in the capital of his kingdom.

The past had been a long reign ; though the de-throned monarch was still not quite forty years of age. And though civil strife had latterly done so much to deface the country, it has left remains which yet attract the eye by their beauty. The style of architecture, strangely named *Gothic*, had become more richly ornamented than in the preceding age ; without being so overloaded with decorations as in the following. Hence the traveller who sees an ancient English church or monastic ruin, with a rich variety of sculptured ornaments and tracery, whilst he observes the key-stones in the arches of its roof, to project but little, if at all, and the pointed arch of the windows not more flattened than in the *pure Gothic**, will seldom be mistaken in supposing that its builders were subjects of Henry VI. Such is the style of the choir and tower of Gloucester cathedral ; of much of the east end of Lincoln cathedral ; of the Beauchamp chapel at Warwick, erected to contain the tomb of the chivalrous persecutor of Joan of Arc ; of Redcliff church, in Bristol ; of Boston and Kerton, in Lincolnshire ; of Taunton church, in Somersetshire ; and of Lavenham in Suffolk †.

But whilst the mistaken hope of thus atoning for the corruption felt within, stimulated the meek Henry, and the desire of buying off the punishment due to gross outward offences, induced others to encourage expensive architects in *adorning with goodly stones and gifts* ‡ those perishable houses

* See pages 292, 293.

† The chapel of King's College, Cambridge, was begun by Henry VI., who examined and approved of the architect's plan, and devoted £4000. a-year out of his paternal estates, inherited from the dukes of Lancaster, as a building fund for the erection of his two colleges, King's and Eton. But from the interruptions which broke in upon this appropriation of his money, this magnificent chapel was not completed till nearly a hundred years after the laying of its foundation ; and the most striking peculiarities in its decorations exhibit the florid style of its last period.

‡ Luke xxi. 5.

of God which are *made with hands*, the civil magistrates and the priesthood conspired to prevent the souls of men, *the living stones*, from being *built up into a spiritual house, for spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ**. The practice, indeed, of burning Scripture readers for heretics, seems to have been suspended for the last sixteen years of the reign now concluded. Perhaps the priests found Henry too kind-hearted to put his name to any order, for executing a fellow creature in so horrible a manner. But they had the art to make every layman's property become the means of surrounding him with spies and enemies, the moment he should begin to search the Scriptures. The first rule as to the property of any one condemned for a heretic, had been, that it should be divided between the king, the city in which he might be convicted, and his judge. Whereby it was craftily managed that the government, the bystanders on his trial, and the judge, who alone could declare him innocent, should all be gainers by his being pronounced guilty. But the priests, acting as interpreters of the law, had now decided, that if a man should be a concealed heretic for ten years; or, to speak justly, a secret worshipper of God, according to His holy will, for that length of time; and should go down to his grave unsuspected of this, but should afterwards be discovered to have been a heretic, then not only should the property of which he died possessed, be forfeited to the king; but any sale of his lands, or any bonds executed by him, during those ten years, should become void, and the land should be included amongst his forfeitures. Thus all the persons who had any important money transactions with another, became interested in keeping him steady in his adherence to the popish church; either by persuasion, or by giving such in-

* 1 Peter ii. 5.

formation to the priests as might lead to his being corrected before he had made up his mind to a change. Whilst those who gave the least encouragement to any reformer, to speak to them of the things which concerned their souls, or gave their neighbours any occasion to suspect them of reading the Bible, found all men afraid of having any such dealings with them as might implicate them in their forfeitures. By devices like these, which made even the approach of a Lollard a terror to his neighbours, the progress of the reformation was more effectually checked than it had been, or would have been, by publicly burning the reformers. For that barbarous punishment could not have been carried into execution against great numbers without making the priesthood to be abhorred by a nation, too high spirited to bear the frequent sight of oppression, and naturally disposed to be indignant at cruelty. But that the change in the manner of proceeding towards the reformers, was not the result of the prelates having become ashamed of the severity of their predecessors, appears from the way in which they persecuted one of their own order, Reginald Pecock, bishop of Chichester, when he made himself offensive to his colleagues by publicly teaching that the "priests would be condemned at the last day, if they drew not men by clear reasoning into consent of the true faith," meaning the popish, "rather than by fire, or sword, or hanging."

This bishop endeavoured to practise what he thus recommended. And he bears witness to the Lollards, that they loved him for hearing their replies without heaping reproaches upon them. He farther endeavoured to win them over, by writing tracts in the English tongue; instead of denouncing men as heretics for reading English. And, though he would not confess that his church had erred, or could err, he did not insist on their believing that

it could not err; whilst he agreed with them that no article of faith could properly be insisted upon as necessary to salvation, unless it could be proved from Scripture. But the besetting infirmity of this benevolent prelate seems to have been vanity; hence in one of his tracts, he tells the Lollards, that they would find in others of his writings "so great wit and learning in the Christian religion," that, if they would but read diligently, they would clearly see "how far the wit and cunning* of clerks passed their wit and learning." Whereas the poor bishop was, in truth, so far from being such a learned clerk as to justify him in thinking himself better informed than the teachers of the Lollards, that we find him pressing them to acknowledge the Pope's right to govern the church, as successor to the apostle Peter, on the ground that our Lord gave him the name of *Cephas*; which, said the Bishop, means a *head*; whereas *it is by interpretation a stone*†. Had the Bishop known either Greek or Hebrew, the original languages of the New and Old Testament, he could not have made so gross a mistake. But his infirmity led to the entire destruction of his worldly prosperity; for it tempted him to set up as a corrector of both parties, and an improver of the creed; so that, though he wrote in defence of those cases in which the candidates for a bishopric paid the Pope as much as 600*l.* to be admitted to a see; and also defended the begging friars, for wearing jewels, whilst they affected so great an abhorrence of money, that they could not touch it without gloves; and though he farther published an ingenious defence of the bishops, for their entire disuse of preaching, he still excited such anger against himself, among the more bigoted papists,

* These words were then used to mean wisdom and knowledge.

† John i. 42.

that he was tried for a heretic, before archbishop Bourchier; and pronounced guilty.

In delivering his sentence, that blind leader of the blind ventured to urge against bishop Pecock, that, whereas he had spoken of proving every article of faith by Scripture, a great doctor of their church had declared, "that he should by no means believe the holy Gospel of Christ, unless it was approved by the authority of the church." And in conclusion, the archbishop told him, that he must either publicly confess himself to have been in error; or he must be given up to the civil power, to become "the fuel of a fire, and the food of the burning." At the hearing of this, bishop Pecock's courage gave way. He perhaps, thought, that the difference between his own opinions and those of his brother bishops, not being so important, as that between those of the Lollards and his church, it did not impose upon him the duty of suffering death, rather than surrender his opinions. He therefore yielded to the archbishop's threat; and consented to humble himself before his brethren, by reading at St. Paul's Cross, before an immense assemblage of people, such a condemnation of those doctrines which he had long openly taught, and of the books which he had published, as the archbishop chose to put into his mouth. Yet could not this save the submissive old man from being deprived of his bishopric, and condemned to solitary confinement for the remainder of his life, in a cell, at Thorney Abbey, in the Cambridgeshire fens. His persecutors thought to make his punishment the severer, by cutting him off from what might otherwise have amused his solitary hours. So they ordered that he should not be permitted the use of pen, ink, nor paper; nor of any books, but his Mass-book, a Psalter, a Legendary, and the Bible.

We know that in his prosperity, this bishop had

le it his especial prayer to the Lord, that “of
 cy, pity, and charity,” he would “shield” his
 vants from continuing in any “belief, which He
 His apostles had not taught for the very faith.”
 And now he was to experience, that *the Lord is nigh
 to all them that call upon Him in truth; and will
 fulfil the desire of them that fear Him**. The hu-
 ating light in which bishop Pecock had been
 ged to expose himself at St. Paul’s, was pecu-
 ly fitted to pluck up by the roots, that vanity,
 ch had got so strong hold of his soul. And the
 cy of Him “who alone can order the unruly
 s of sinful men” to work his gracious purposes,
 equally conspicuous in putting it into the hearts
 the bishop’s enemies to make it unavoidable that
 should give his mind to comparing the idle tales
 he Romish Legendary, and the superstitions of
 Mass-book, with the perfect law of God. As-
 edly this proof that his prayers were heard,
 ild draw him on to dwell upon his Bible, not
 y for daily needed instruction, but as the much
 ed treasure of our Heavenly Father’s bounty,
 in those promises which *fill the hungry soul
 h goodness*†; and making him to exclaim in his
 tary cell, with that joy which the world without
 ild never have given him, *It is good for me that
 ave been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*
*The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thou-
 ds of gold and silver* ‡.

Psalm cxlv. 18, 19.

† Ibid cvii. 9.

Ibid. cxix. 71, 72. Every word of that division of this beautiful
 n, must have been to him like the voice of a present and consoling

How aptly is that Holy Spirit named *the Comforter*, who moved
 Psalmist to leave such a testimony of what he had suffered, and
 hat he had gained by his troubles?

CHAPTER IV.

Edward IV.; of the house of York.

SOVEREIGNS REIGNING AT THE SAME TIME.

<i>Emperor of Germany.</i>	<i>King of Scotland.</i>
A.D.	A.D.
Frederic III.	James III.
<i>Kings of France.</i>	<i>Popes.</i>
Charles VII.	Pius II.
Louis XI. 1461	Paul II. 1464
	Sixtus IV. 1471.

THE throne which Edward had usurped, ^{March 4,} was not yet won. Of this he was well aware, ^{1461.} and eagerly hastened his preparations for the struggle which should lose or gain it. Within two days after his taking upon him the title of king, he had sent the duke of Norfolk to muster his tenantry, in one direction; and the earl of Warwick in another. Whilst he himself quitted London at the end of a week, to march his forces northward.

As there was now no longer room to doubt of the object aimed at, every man warmly attached to either party, and every one ready to stain his hands for spoil, with the blood of his countrymen, hurried to join the standard of either Henry or Edward; so that it is not unreasonable to believe the accounts which make the Lancastrian generals to have had 60,000 men under their command; and Edward near 50,000. The advanced troops of both, first came to blows at Ferry-bridge; where a body of the Yorkists, under the lord Fitzwalter, were sur-

by lord Clifford, before day-break; and their
 ander slain. An hour or two later, the earl
 urwick arrived on the spot, and Clifford was
 by an arrow; which entered his throat, as he
 asing his gorget. On seeing him fall, his fol-
 s gave way; and rejoined the main body of the
 astrians encamped at Towton, a little village
 e miles south-west of York. In the afternoon
 at same day, Edward and Warwick

March 28.

ht up their army in battle array; and
 h there remained little more than two hours
 set, and a storm of snow was coming on, they
 lord Falconberg begin the attack. The
 ng of the wind at this moment, was favourable
 success of the Yorkists; for it drove the snow
 faces of the Lancastrians, and prevented their
 iving that lord Falconberg, after pouring in
 them a flight of arrows, drew back his men
 id bow-shot; so that the Lancastrian archers
 d their strength and their arrows in vain. But
 the earl of Northumberland, galled by the
 is forces were suffering, pressed on to close
 at, the battle became murderous on both sides;
 so it continued to rage with unabated fury, till
 larkness made it impossible for the combatants
 distinguish between friends and foes.

he following morning was that of the Sunday
 e Easter; a morning on which it was then
 mary to see the priests and youths carrying
 lossoming branches of the early willow, in re-
 brance of those palm branches, which our
 try is too cold to produce, that were borne
 e the Prince of Peace, when he entered Jeru-
 to prepare for the future reign of meekness
 of love. But neither the desire which all Chris-
 profess to have, of being admitted into His
 dom, nor the superstitious respect with which

their church required them to regard even its idlest ceremonies, could induce the adverse hosts to let their rancour pause till this one day were past. It is rarely indeed, that reason can make herself be heard in the storm of angry passions, or else reason might have convinced the nobles in arms, that they had held a far more dignified position, when sitting in parliament, as umpires between rival competitors for the throne of England, than now, when bent on gaining by brute force, the upper hand for their favourite party. But men had too long praised themselves for behaving in a spirit the very reverse to that of which our Saviour gave the example; and the customs of chivalry had taught the brave and the great to yield nothing their swords could defend. With the dawn therefore, of the Sabbath morn, the Yorkists and the Lancastrians began the battle anew; not urged by the necessity of combating to defend their country from a foreign spoiler, or its liberties from a tyrant; but merely to settle a question of right, which the parties then in the field, could have decided without striking a blow. For Edward and Margaret must either have submitted to their decision, or have drawn off, comparatively unattended; if the Neviles on one side, and the Beauforts and Percys on the other, with the independent nobles and gentlemen of either army, had insisted on determining in calm debate, who should wear the English crown. Most justly therefore, did that *blessed and only Potentate** whose undeniable claims to obedience were the only ones that both parties thought fit to pass over with contemptuous neglect; most justly did He give them up to take their fill of the deadly fruits of that pride which He abhors†; and of that indifference to the shedding of human blood, against which He long ago uttered His sentence‡. Both sides re-

* 1 Tim. vi. 15.

† Prov. viii. 13.

‡ Gen. ix. 6.



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ter. Fighting hand to hand, they ground with the slain. And yet l gained any decided advantage; Norfolk arrived with fresh troops, rd's side of the field; and the sur- is, overpowered and dismayed, be- to flight. For a distance round, tained the whiteness of the snow; York, the road was strewn with n, whose sword-wounds had made he loss of blood, as they faintly each a place of safety. Edward, his troops to spare none, wrote er, that the heralds sent over the counted the dead bodies of 28,000 nd the priests who attended the in, reckoned the whole number, ig to distinguish their party, at d more. But who shall count the ns*, whom such slaughter of hus-, must have reduced to wretched- he killed in fight were not enough ition, the young king put the earls tshire† to death a few days after; fore him by their captors. The berland and Westmoreland, with llen in the field of battle. Whilst

ord Clifford, who stained his sword with the arl of Rutland, was now left an orphan boy.

his father's castle into a peasant's hut, with of life as a poor shepherd; the friends of his for him, that he should be kept in such obscu- ould put him to death, in revenge for his father's -four years later, his title and estates were ed that adversity had taught him to pity distress. are said to remain, of the kindness of "The was called.

of Ormond in Ireland; but bearing the title of English court. This family has been peculiarly ifferent periods, for its generous, though not itachment to fallen sovereigns, when utterly un-

the dukes of Somerset and Exeter had escaped to York, in time to guard Henry and Queen Margaret from thence to the borders of Scotland ; in which country the royal fugitives were kindly received by the guardians of James III ; and gave up to him, in return, the often contested frontier town of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Edward now left the Neviles to watch the north. And, though king Henry and the friends still with him, twice crossed the Scotch borders, to try their strength on English ground, it was but to suffer farther losses. For whilst the Lancastrians were besieging Carlisle, Lord Montague burst into their camp, and slew 6000 of them. In the mean time, king Edward had been received in London with much triumphant show ; and had conferred on his younger brothers, George and Richard, the respective titles of duke of Clarence, and duke of Glou-

November. cester. There he held a parliament, which pronounced all the sovereigns of the house of Lancaster to have been usurpers, and annulled their grants ; though it confirmed the titles they had given, and the laws enacted in their name. It farther passed acts of attainder, whereby Henry VI, his queen, and son, the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, the earls of Northumberland, Devon, Wilts, and Pembroke, with six other nobles, one hundred and thirty eight knights, priests, and esquires, some living, and some slain, were declared to have been guilty of treason against Edward IV ; to whom their estates were, therefore, to be forfeited. Nothing could be much more unjust than thus to condemn a number of persons unheard, for opposing Edward in his successful attempt to wrest the crown from a sovereign, whom both he and the voters for these acts, as well as the condemned, had sworn to defend against all his enemies. But the surviving Lancastrian peers and influential commoners, had not dared to attend this parliament, to which only thirty-five

nobles had been summoned; so that the Yorkists had every thing their own way. And they conducted themselves like men accustomed to consider might as more than right. Whilst the new king, to maintain his popularity with them, took the unusual step of addressing the speaker of the House of Commons by name, saying, "James Strangways, and ye that be come for the commons of this my land! For the true hearts and tender considerations that ye have had, to my right and title, I thank you as heartily as I can. And I shall be unto you, with the grace of Almighty God, as good and gracious sovereign lord, as ever was any of my noble progenitors, to their subjects and liegemen."

The young monarch, thus rapidly raised from the earldom of March to the English throne, was still not twenty years of age; with a handsome person, a noble air, and winning manners. All these things were against him. For all conspired to beset him with overpowering temptations to become *a lover of pleasure*, instead of *a lover of God* *. And having surrendered himself, body and soul, to the love of pleasure, it was but a natural consequence that he should become one of the most selfish of men. For the desire of gratifying self, is obviously the ruling motive of the dissolute, and selfishness is ever the besetting sin of the great; who are unceasingly tempted to it, by seeing numbers habitually sacrificing their own wills to theirs. Whoever, therefore, is so unhappy as to be at once a voluptuary and a king, must be expected to display in his conduct the very extremity of selfishness. Indeed it would have required a miracle of grace to save Edward IV from preferring the gratification of his own wishes to the good of his neighbour, after he had seen so many thousand men willing to offend God and their brother, that he might gain the crown he lusted after.

* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

And poor king Edward had never learned to pray, that he might be enabled to live up to that difficult command, which says, *Let no man seek his own, but every man another's weal**. For the conduct to which this ruling passion led him, Edward has been called generous and forgiving by some, cruel and vindictive by others; when he neither deserved the praise, nor the condemnation. There is a natural pleasure in seeing cheerful countenances around us, and in hearing the not insincere flatteries of the thankful; and therefore an exceedingly selfish king will be constantly bestowing favours at the cost of others, and granting petitions to those who have access to his presence; not from the wish of benefiting them, but to gratify himself. But let the very men whom he has thus made happy be removed out of his sight, so that he need not fear to see their afflicted looks, nor to be teased by their complaints; and then, if their happiness or their lives happen to come at all in the way of his desires, the master they perhaps sincerely loved, shall be capable of assenting to the most cruel sentence against them; not from the wish to inflict pain on them, but to prevent his own pleasures from being interrupted. Such was the character of Edward IV.; and such was that of Henry VIII., and of Charles II. But indeed that Holy Spirit to whom the heart of man is ever open, has borne his sure testimony to these consequences of selfishness; describing the *lovers of their own selves*, as also *unthankful, without natural affection, covenant-breakers, and betrayers*†.

Fond, however, as Edward was of pleasure, he was not yet permitted to rest upon his throne in easy carelessness. In the following spring queen Margaret sailed from Scotland to the shores of
 1462. France, to solicit the help of Louis XI.; and, by offering to put Calais into his hands, she obtained

* 1 Cor. x. 24.

† 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4.

from him a loan of 20,000 crowns ; with permission to engage the services of Piers Des Brizay, the seneschal of Normandy, and of 2000 military adventurers under his command. With this small force the dauntless woman recrossed the sea in October ; and landing near Newcastle, she summoned the partizans of the house of Lancaster to join her ; whilst she drew several Scotch nobles to her camp, by promising an English dukedom to the earl of Angus, their leader. Bamborough, Alnwick, and Dunstanburgh castles soon fell into her hands ; but the Lancastrian party had been too thoroughly subdued, and intimidated, to supply her army with any considerable reinforcements. And when king Edward and the earl of Warwick had brought 20,000 men within two days march of her, Margaret yielded to the necessity of embarking again with her French auxiliaries. At sea, other calamities awaited her. The vessel which contained her money was wrecked ; and 500 of the French having sought shelter on Holy Island, from the fury of the waves, were there put to death by the lord Ogle ; whilst the queen and Des Brizay reached Berwick with difficulty, in an open boat. Bamborough and Dunstanburgh were soon surrendered to Edward, by the duke of Somerset and Sir Ralph Percy ; on his promising that the acts of attainder against them should be repealed. But Alnwick castle was bravely defended some months longer ; until lord Hungerford and a party of French knights sallied out ; and, cutting their way through the besiegers, left the rest of the garrison to make what terms they could. 1463.

Still the spirit of Margaret was unsubdued. She now sailed for Flanders, to try her influence with the duke of Burgundy ; who, however, sent her nothing more than sufficient money for her immediate necessities. On her departure, king Henry is supposed to have been conducted by his friends to Harlech castle, in North Wales ; a country thought inacces-

sible, whilst armies were led on by knights; who would not move any where on foot, and held their cavalry to be the only valuable part of their troops.

1464. But in the following April Henry was invited from Harlech, to appear in an army raised by the duke of Somerset and Sir Ralph Percy; still faithful to him, though not so to the oaths which they had lately taken, to be obedient subjects of Edward IV.

The queen had joined them. But they were defeated in succession, by Nevile lord Montague.

Apr. 25. Percy fell in an engagement near Wooller, in Northumberland. The duke of Somerset and the queen were vanquished after a hard-fought engagement, at Hexham, in the same county. The duke was taken and beheaded; as were the lords Roos and Hungerford. And the queen, having entered a wood with her son, to seek concealment from their pursuers, is said to have found herself in the power of some outlawed robbers; whose chief she immediately addressed, with the courage which so distinguished her, and told him, that the wife and son of his injured sovereign claimed his help. The story goes, that the man, from awe or pity, acknowledged her claim to his services; and, conducting them to the sea-shore, was thus the means of their being again enabled to escape to the continent. There Margaret now took up her abode, at one of her father's castles in Lorraine; apparently convinced, at length, that she must rest from her toils, without having a kingdom to govern.

The new duke of Somerset and his brother were also obliged to fly from England; and to become pensioners on the duke of Burgundy's bounty. Holland duke of Exeter, to whom Henry VI. had restored the titles forfeited by his grandfather, and who, though married to a sister of Edward IV. would never desert the cause of his benefactor, was also driven abroad; and was seen begging his bread

in the streets of a Flemish town. The earl of Pembroke, half-brother to king Henry, was another unwilling wanderer in foreign lands. The estates and titles of the Percies were bestowed, by Edward, on lord Montague; whom he made earl of Northumberland. And Henry himself, having been so closely followed, that three of his servants, with his personal baggage, containing his cap of state, fell into the hands of his pursuers, was fain to seek concealment among the tenants of his hereditary estates in Lancashire. Their affection was won by his meek conversation; and they guarded him so faithfully and so secretly, that the government was unable, for above a year, to discover his retreat; till a monk of Abingdon betrayed him to his enemies, who came upon him as he was seated at dinner in Wadington Hall, near Clitheroe. From thence he was conveyed to London. And the earl of Warwick, who went out to meet him, disgraced himself, by ordering that the legs of this unoffending prince, so long his kind master, should be bound with leather straps to his stirrups, and that he should be led thrice round the pillory in Cheapside, before he was shut up in the Tower. There, however, Henry's character protected him, for the present, from farther ^{July,} harm. For king Edward thought it useless ^{1465.} to incur any unpopularity by putting to death the man whom he had already sufficiently injured; and whom he believed too unambitious to form any plots for the recovery of his crown.

The young king had in truth, far more dangerous enemies to his peace within his own breast. His readiness to sacrifice prudence to the pursuit of pleasure, had already manifested itself.—

Whilst the earl of Warwick was collecting ^{Apr.} troops, with which the king and he might ^{1464.} march into the north, to combat those Lancastrians whom his brother, lord Montague defeated a few weeks later, at Hexham, Edward was in Warwick's

neighbourhood at Stony Stratford, amusing himself with hunting in the adjacent forests of Northamptonshire. Pursuing this diversion, the king happened to alight for refreshment at Grafton, the residence of lord Rivers, and of his wife, Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford *, and at this time the asylum of their daughter Elizabeth, the widow of Sir John Grey, who had fallen fighting against the Yorkists. Thus introduced to her sovereign, lady Grey threw herself on her knees before him, and besought him to give her back her husband's lands, for the maintenance of her orphan children. Her beauty and her address produced an immediate and strong impression upon the young monarch. She would not suffer him to tempt her into sin. And after a very few more interviews, he rode over from Stony Stratford,

May. unattended, at a very early hour in the morning, and was married to her, in the presence of her mother, the duchess, and of but three other witnesses, besides the priest. It is evident from this privacy, that the king was conscious his friends and ministers would have earnestly remonstrated against the imprudence of affronting the great nobility of his party, by elevating the widow of a mere knight above their wives and daughters; and of entangling himself in so near a connexion with a numerous family, too poor to appear at court as the kinsmen of their sovereign, without drawing very largely on his bounty; and too recently and notoriously his enemies, to admit of his heaping preferment on them, without manifest injustice to those who had long put their lives and fortunes at stake to raise him to greatness.

When the king's dislike to hearing the language of objection had brought him to stoop to a secret marriage, he was farther tempted to keep his marriage concealed for half a year, before he could re-

* See page 504.

solve on encountering the angry countenances, and sneers of those nobles who formed his court. So that the earl of Warwick, who considered himself as a sort of guardian to the king, being at the same time one of his nearest relations, and the chief promoter of his aggrandizement, had been allowed to go on devising and weighing the respective advantages of sundry political matches for him, when he was suddenly desired by Edward, to join the duke of Clarence, in presenting the widow Grey to the peers and people, as already their queen. Sept.

Her brothers were accomplished men of the world ; pleasant companions for king Edward. And to see them and her in good humour, he soon began to load the Wydvile family with those royal favours, which the old partizans of the house of York had hoped would prove exclusively their own. Lord Mountjoy was removed from the office of treasurer, to be replaced by the queen's father. And as the sovereign had then the disposal of noble minors in marriage, the young duke of Buckingham, and the heirs of the earls of Arundel, Essex, and Kent, and of the lord Herbert, were obliged to receive the queen's five unmarried sisters for their wives ; whilst the lord Maltravers, who had been sometime the husband of another sister, was made keeper of the new forest. To her brother Antony, the king gave the heiress of lord Scales, with that title ; and her brother John, making no difficulty of accepting the monstrous union offered him, by way of provision, was married to the wealthy duchess dowager of Norfolk ; he being in his twentieth, and she in her eightieth year. A less near relationship to the queen procured for sir Thomas Vaughan the office of treasurer of the king's chamber. And, lastly, her son, Thomas Grey, was made marquis of Dorset, and was allowed to marry the king's niece, lady Anne Holland ; receiving with her the ample estates

of which that lady's father, the duke of Exeter, had been deprived.

On the other hand, were it not part of the appointed punishment of ambitious men, that they should never accept the pleasures of contentment, the Neviles possessed, and had received, enough to satisfy more extravagant wishes than they can well be supposed to have formed in the beginning of their career. The earl of Warwick, holding that title and the annexed estates in right of his wife, with the antient property of the Spensers, had also succeeded to the earldom of Salisbury on his father's death. Whilst he had obtained from the crown, and united in his own person, the lucrative and important offices of great chamberlain of England, high admiral, warden of the western marches, and governor of Calais, supposed to yield him 20,000*l.* a year, in addition to the income he received from his estates; and this, when the average price of wheat was but eleven shillings. With this wealth, however, it was his pride to maintain a wasteful hospitality, which assisted to keep him craving for more possessions. The citizens of London, from whom he *had his reward*, for so bestowing his alms as *to have glory of men**, have recorded of him, that when he came among them to attend the court, he kept such an open house, that six oxen were consumed by his own household and guests, at a breakfast†, every servant's friend being allowed to

* Matt. vi. 2.

† In this account, and that which follows, it should be remembered that from irregular feeding, and unskilful management, the English cattle were then a very much smaller breed than we are accustomed to see. Yet as the wool of sheep is often finer in proportion to the poverty of their bodies, the reputation of the English sheep was such, that the sovereign of the Spanish kingdoms of Castile and Leon, was glad to obtain Edward's licence to export twenty ewes and five rams, from the Cotswold downs of Gloucestershire. And a chronicler of Queen Elizabeth's time, about one hundred years after, complains that this had

carry away with him as much meat as he could stick upon his dagger. It has been already mentioned that the earldom of Northumberland had been taken from the Percies and given to John Nevile, lord Montague. And now a third brother, George Nevile, the prelate whom the Yorkists had forced Henry VI. to accept for his chancellor, was promoted by Edward IV. from the see of Exeter to the Archbishopric of York; on which occasion, as if to shew his contempt for that Scripture which requires, that *a bishop be sober, holy, and temperate**, this prelate distinguished his entrance on his sacred charge, by such a parade of gluttonous feasting, as has, perhaps, never been equalled in England. The account of his installation dinner, contains, however, such an enormous list of many things, then thought luxuries, as makes it more difficult to believe they were served up, than to suppose that the steward of such a master was as unfaithful to him, as the archbishop was in his stewardship before his God †.

But though the Neviles had been willingly favoured by Edward, hitherto, their prosperity was as nothing in their eyes, when they saw others likely to have more influence at court than they. Hence the earl of Warwick soon grew too discontented to abstain from endeavouring to make the king feel his resentment; and therefore warmly opposed him in the council, on his bringing forward a project, which he evidently had much at heart, for marrying his sister, Margaret Plantagenet, to Charles duke of

so improved the wool of the Spanish breed as to have enabled the Spaniards to injure the English growers by their rivalry.

* Tit. i. 8.

† Besides 110 oxen, 1000 sheep, 2600 calves and pigs, 500 stags and deer, 12 porpoises and seals, with 300 quarters of wheat, 300 tuns of ale, and 100 of wine, and a pipe of ipocrasse; the archbishops' steward gave in an account of 40,000 other dishes, or animals, as served up at this feast; including the incredible number of 2400 rees, and 1000 egrets.

May, 1467. **Burgundy.** To get rid of his presence and opposition, the king sent him over to France, as ambassador to Louis XI., who had expressed a desire to have the English princess married to one of his nearer kinsmen. This Louis was ever full of crafty devices, and knowing the haughty character of the earl, he flattered him by affecting to treat him as a brother sovereign, come to be his visitor; and then sent him back accompanied by some French nobles, who were to offer the king of England money, if he would give up his proposed connection with the Burgundian. But in Warwick's absence, Edward had deprived his brother, the archbishop of York, of the chancellorship; going to his house, with a numerous retinue, to demand from him the seals of office. And he had also insisted on this prelate's giving up to him two manors; agreeably to an act of parliament, passed some time before, for resuming the crown grants made by Henry VI. And when the earl returned to London with the envoys of Louis in his company, the king retired into the country, to avoid their importunities, and left an inferior agent to acquaint them, that he had been continuing his negociation with the duke of Burgundy, and had brought it to a satisfactory close. There was enough in this to provoke a more patient person than Nevile, earl of Warwick; and he withdrew in anger to his northern castle of Middleham.

For the present, however, common friends interfering, the king gave the archbishop his two manors again. And when the lady Margaret Plantagenet was about to join the duke of Burgundy in Flanders, to be married to him there, the earl of Warwick, as high chamberlain, carried her on horseback behind him, through the streets of London*. *But the beginning of strife is as the*

* Among the humbler personages in her train was William Caxton; who becoming acquainted, in Flanders, either with the ingenious inven-

letting out of water *; not so easily ended. The Neviles perceived, that the king's gratitude to their family had passed away. And their indignation, at his exclusive attachment to the Wydviles, being shared by the duke of Clarence, the earl of Warwick began to court the society of this young prince, and offered him his daughter Isabella in marriage. The earl had no son; so that this lady and her sister Anne were the co-heiresses to his vast estates. And when the king, disliking to see his brother connect himself so closely with the Neviles, refused his approbation to the match, the archbishop of York, the earl, and the duke, repaired to Calais and celebrated the marriage there, without his ^{July 11,} 1469. leave.

At the very same time, an insurrection broke out in the country where their influence was strongest, fifteen thousand of the northern yeomanry and peasantry appearing in arms in Yorkshire, under Robert Hilyard, or Robin of Redesdale, as they called him. These insurgents professed to aim at the redress of two grievances. The one was a local tax, of a thrave of corn from every plough-land in the northern counties; levied, by an old royal grant, for St. Leonard's Hospital, in York. But their other subject of complaint, was the promotion of the Wydviles; who, they said, impoverished the king, and obliged him to burden his people, to support their extravagance. There was ground for complaining of the money transactions of this reign; but noblemen of such weight as the Neviles ought to have shared the blame thus laid upon the queen's

tors, or with some of the first persons who practised the art of printing, perceived its importance; and, having learned both how to make types, and to use them, brought this invaluable discovery to England. One of the earliest productions of the English press, was a translation from the French of 'The Sayings of Philosophers,' which Caxton printed in 1477, for Antony Wydville, lord Scales, afterwards earl Rivers; who introduced him to the king's favourable notice.

* *Prov. xvii. 14.*

relations. For it could scarcely have been owing to the influence of the Wydviles, that a parliament, held but a few months after Edward's marriage, set the first example of granting taxes for the sovereign's life, instead of obliging him to request new subsidies from the commons, when needed by the expenses of his government. The grant which parliament thus made him, was no less than a *tonnage* and *poundage* of 3*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* for every sack of wool, and every 240 woolfells; 6*l.* 9*s.* for every last of hides, exported by an English merchant; and double those sums, on the like articles, if exported by a foreigner. Now the revenues of the crown estates ought to have been so increased by the property seized into the king's hands, on the authority of acts of attainder against his opponents, as to have made it unnecessary to impose so heavy a tax on the trade in agricultural produce; for it is said by a lawyer and statesman of those days, that the forfeited estates, and resumed grants, amounted to a fifth of the whole kingdom, before the close of Edward's reign. An ill consequence of thus enabling the king to bear all the ordinary expences of his government and court, without appealing to parliament for farther help, became conspicuous somewhat later; when Edward found it so agreeable to be exempt from having an assemblage of noblemen and gentlemen sitting in judgment upon his conduct and that of his ministers, that he allowed intervals of five and seven years to pass, without calling parliament together; and was at length tempted to devise a new and unlawful method of supplying his wants, without asking the consent of parliament, by sending letters to merchants, and others, requiring them to give him certain specified sums, in proof of their good will; in allusion to which, he called the money thus extorted by the fear of his displeasure *a benevolence*. For another unjust device for replenishing his treasury, lord Rivers probably deserves the

blame; as it was one of the first financial measures that followed that nobleman's appointment to the office of treasurer. From the end of Henry the Fourth's reign, to the year 1464, the pound sterling had contained as much silver as 1*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* of our present currency; and has therefore been spoken of, in this history, as 2*l.*, or nearly so; when any mention of English money has occurred. But in that year, when the king had received his dues in this old coinage, he had it made into new coin, to pay his creditors withal, so reduced in weight, that the pound was only equal to 1*l.* 11*s.* of our money. Hence where the king had received 1000*l.* from one subject, and should have paid the same sum to another, he received under that name, what we should call 1937*l.*; and then paid, under the same name to his creditor, what we should call no more than 1550*l.* defrauding his subjects by this diminution in the weight of the coin, of 387*l.*, modern currency, in every transaction to the above amount. And the policy of this proceeding was as short-sighted as it was iniquitous. For example, the duty of 1*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* on every sack of wool, which was called, just above, 3*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*, because that was its real value at the time it was granted by the Commons, brought the king but 2*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* after this change in the coinage. And the fixed money payments payable as fines, or otherwise, from the copyholders on his manors, and on those of his nobility, were all, thenceforward, proportionably diminished in real value. At the moment of the change, however, it was felt by the people, that their sovereign was making an unfair gain at their expence; and the measure farther harassed them, by the confusion it necessarily made in their transactions with each other, and by the disturbance it gave to credit.

Still, as such proceedings had been frequently resorted to by the kings of France * and Scotland, in

* See pages 203. and 244.

which last country the coins were by this time reduced to but a quarter the value of the English ones of the same denomination; and as, though rarer, they were by no means unprecedented in England, Edward's subjects did not feel themselves so peculiarly aggrieved as to be generally tempted to rebellion. Hence Hilyard and the northern farmers, with their men, were only joined by such persons as might justly be suspected of acting under the instigation of the earl of Warwick and the archbishop. And on the other hand, Warwick's brother, the earl of Northumberland, having been entrusted by king Edward with the care of the north, had no alternative, but that of either quelling the insurrection, or joining the insurgents. After some delay he marched against them, and defeated them with considerable slaughter; executing their leader on the field of battle. But, when Hilyard was killed, the connection between the insurgents and the earl of Warwick, became still more evident. For, before they could retire to their homes, they were rallied under the banners of the lords Fitz-Hugh and Latimer, young and near relations of the earl, with Sir John Conyers, an old and able officer, for their adviser. Their numbers now rapidly increased again; every unprincipled adventurer expecting good pay, or spoil, in an army likely to be headed by the earl of Warwick. The earl of Northumberland made no second attack upon them, whilst they marched southward without approaching his quarters; and, when they had crossed the Trent, they bent their way towards Fotheringhay castle; as if to seize king Edward there. He was watching their movements; and had ordered the lord Herbert and Sir Humphrey Stafford to intercept them; the former at the head of 8000 Welshmen; the latter with a less force, raised in Devon and Somerset. To increase the attachment of these partizans, Edward had given to lord Herbert the title of earl of Pembroke, and to

Stafford that of earl of Devonshire ; dignities already belonging to two Lancastrians, Jasper Tudor, and the head of the English Courtenays. But the pride he fomented proved their destruction. Stafford, irritated by the rudeness with which lord Herbert's Welshmen obtruded into his quarters at Banbury, drew off his men ; and the northern insurgents, coming upon Herbert with a very superior force, utterly routed his army, and beheaded him the next day. Whilst Edward, enraged at Stafford's conduct, issued orders for his being seized and put to death. The earl of Rivers, and his son John Wydville, husband to the duchess of Norfolk, were the next who fell by these cold-blooded murders ; being executed without trial or warrant, in the like manner, at the will of the insurgents ; who found them on their family estate at Grafton. July 26.

By this time the earl of Warwick, with his brother the archbishop of York, and his new son-in-law the duke of Clarence, had arrived in England. And in feigned obedience to the king's summons, they joined him at Olney with a large retinue of their armed followers ; whilst several of his private friends withdrew as they approached. Edward himself received them cheerfully ; but frankly told the Nevilles, that their late conduct had given rise to suspicions, which he would gladly dismiss ; and that he wished to have it explained. Instead, however, of hearing their apologies, he quickly discovered that he was in their power ; and must submit to their orders.

Without dissolving the government, or deigning to give the nation any notice that its monarch was no longer free, the earl of Warwick carried king Edward in his train to Middleham castle ; and then left him in the custody of the archbishop. Thus were there two kings in England, at once, and each of them, a prisoner. Henry VI. in the Tower ; and Edward IV. in a castle in the north of Yorkshire.

This was but a natural consequence of that indifference to the guilt of rebellion, which the founders of both their families had taught the English nobles. The confinement of Edward, however, lasted but a few months. In that interval, Warwick defeated another insurrection, intended to procure the release of Henry VI. And when he liberated Edward IV., it seems to have been on condition of his giving the Nevile family all they could desire, except his throne; with the prospect that even it would, eventually, be occupied by a Nevile. For whilst the earl of Warwick obtained the honours and estates of that earl of Pembroke, whom his partizans had so lately put to death, for fighting in Edward's service; the king, having as yet no son, engaged to give his eldest daughter Elizabeth, to George, son of the earl of Northumberland, who was expected to become the head of the Nevile family, when the older generation should have passed away; his father being the only one of those three powerful brothers who had a legitimate son. For the present, the king conferred on this young man the title of duke of Bedford, last held by the Regent of France; that he might seem a suitable match for a princess, not unlikely to inherit the crown of England. Thus the ambitious devise to perpetuate greatness in their father's house. How this generation of the Neviles was lowered in the dust will soon be told, in its proper place. As for the young man himself, since his end was too obscure to be noticed elsewhere, it may be mentioned now, that in 1478, this duke of Bedford, in whom the wealthy earldoms of Salisbury and Northumberland were to centre, besides what the royal marriage would have brought him, was deprived of his dukedom by an act of parliament, grounded on a plea never used before, nor since, as the excuse for degrading any English nobleman; being no other than this, that he was so poor, that the peerage would be disgraced by his

continuing to bear a title, which he had not means to support with respectability.

It is evident that the king thought himself reduced to the necessity of shewing all outward friendliness towards the nobles, whose machinations had so recently produced the murder of his queen's father and brother ; lord Rivers, and Sir John Wydevile. And he accepted an invitation from archbishop Nevile, to meet his brother Clarence, and the earl of Warwick, at that Prelate's residence of Moor Park, in Hertfordshire. But as the company were washing their hands before supper, John Ratcliffe, afterwards lord Fitz-walter, whispered in the king's ear, that a hundred armed men were in waiting to seize him, and make him once more a prisoner. The king still conversed with those around him, as though he had heard nothing to disturb his cheerfulness ; but presently affected to have occasion for quitting the room, and passing out of the door, he took a horse from the stables, and rode off with all speed to Windsor.

Still the king and the Neviles were again reconciled, in appearance, by the mediation of Cecily, duchess of York, who being his mother and their aunt, had a natural desire to see them united. But presently another rebellion broke out in Lincolnshire, upon the pretext of the injury done to the farmers by the king's purveyor ; whom custom allowed to take whatever he chose for the use of the royal household, at an under price, and that but seldom and slowly paid. The rebels were headed by sir Robert Welles, whose father, with his friend sir Thomas Dymoke, afraid of being implicated in the young man's offence, fled into a church for the protection of sanctuary*, as the king drew near. To get possession of their persons, Edward promised these gentlemen his pardon ; and they, in consequence, re-

* See page 17.

paired to his camp. But when he found that the letters they wrote, at his command, had not the effect of inducing Welles' son to lay down his arms, he had them both beheaded; and then sent him a summons to surrender himself. To which, Sir Robert indignantly answered, that he would never trust the man, who had murdered his father by a treacherous breach of promise. Scarcely, however, had he brought his Lincolnshire farmers
 March 12, 1470. to face the royal army, when a volley of artillery so terrified them, that they fled; and flung off their coats to run the better. From whence the place of their defeat, near Empingham in Rutland, keeps the name of *Losecoat field* to this day. Their unhappy leader was taken and executed; having first confessed, that letters which he had received from Warwick and Clarence, had prevented his complying with his father's request. The king seems scarcely to have suspected this; the grievance put forward by these insurgents being well known as an old, and reasonable, cause of dissatisfaction*. But the earl and duke, whom he had authorized to levy troops for his aid against the Lincolnshire rebels, soon convinced him of the truth of sir Robert Welles' confession, by hastily retreating into the west, when they heard of the Losecoat flight; and then making a vain attempt to persuade lord Stanley to take up arms in their cause. Justly angry at this perfidy, the king marched in pursuit of them; proclaimed them traitors; and succeeded in obliging them both to remove with their families from the kingdom.

The earl of Warwick's authority, as high admiral, enabled him to collect a little fleet wherewith to put to sea, and they made sail for Calais. But his deputy, Vauclerc, refused to let these vessels enter Calais harbour, off which the duchess of Clarence

* See page 328-9. vol. 1, and page 295, vol. 2.

was delivered of a son. And they were obliged to steer for Dieppe. There the French governor received them with much show of respect ; and Louis XI. invited the earl and duke to his court. He also sent for queen Margaret to meet them ; as having so far a common cause, that they all desired the dethronement of Edward ; Louis being chiefly anxious for it, that he might deprive the duke of Burgundy of a powerful ally. For some time Margaret refused to enter into any negotiation with one who had injured her husband so deeply as the earl of Warwick. But by the crafty policy of Louis, she was at length won over to consent, that her son, Prince Edward, should marry Warwick's daughter, the lady Anne Nevile ; on condition of the earl's replacing Henry VI. upon the English throne.—That the earl and duke should be guardians of the kingdom, during the minority of her son.—And that she should signify to the Lancastrians at home, her wish to have the Earl of Warwick supported with all the influence of their party.

Of this agreement the duke of Burgundy sent Edward speedy notice ; and advised him to exert himself strenuously, in putting his kingdom into a posture of defence ; promising him, at the same time, that the Flemish fleet, then superior to the English, should watch the coast of France. This advice only drew from king Edward cold thanks, and the proud reply, “ That all he wished, was to see the rebels landed.” And whilst his enemies were busy in forwarding their preparations, the heedless king was giving himself up to a dissolute life ; and wasting his revenues and his hours in hawking, hunting, and festivities, at which he courted the admiration of the ladies, by setting off his handsome person with the most splendid dresses he could devise. In the midst of these indulgences, however, he was at length startled, by hearing that a proclamation from the earl and the duke, announcing their *speedy arrival*, to effect various reforms, had been

posted upon the doors of churches, and other places of public resort, throughout London; a fact which showed that they had already friends in the city.

There was yet a delay. The duke of Burgundy's Flemish fleet prevented the earl of Warwick from putting to sea; till a strong south wind drove them off Sept. 13. from the French coast, and gave the earl and the duke a speedy passage to the English shore. In this interval king Edward had marched towards the north, where he hoped to be doubly supported, by Percy, earl of Northumberland, to whom he had now restored his family honours; and by John Nevile, to whom he had given, in compensation for that earldom, the higher title of marquess of Montacute, and who, as father of the duke of Bedford, would not wish, the king thought, to see him dethroned, in favour either of Henry, or the duke of Clarence.

To the north the earl of Warwick and the duke followed him; proclaiming Henry VI. once more king of England. Yet the duke had begun to reflect, that, in fighting for the house of Lancaster, he should be combating the interests of his own infant son; who might one day succeed to Edward's crown, as the eldest male representative of the house of York; and he in consequence sent his brother a secret message, to assure him, that he should take an early opportunity of favoring his cause. But whilst king Edward, with the marquess of Montacute as his second in command, was collecting an army in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, and when he happened to be sitting at dinner with lord Hastings, he was told that the earl of Warwick was almost close at hand. And a second messenger entered the room, to tell him, that the marquess, and some other noblemen, had been riding among his troops, and bidding them cry out, 'Long live king Henry,' and that 6000 men had straightway torn off the white rose from their breasts, and trampled it in the dust.

On hearing this, the king instantly sprung upon his feet ; and ordered the soldiers about him to hasten and defend the bridge across the Don, if it were but for an hour. They obeyed ; and the king with a few friends and their followers, riding off as speedily as their horses could carry them, scarcely stopped till they reached Lynn. There they found two Dutch brigs, and an English vessel, just putting out to sea. For these they directly made off, though without any clothes but what were on their backs ; and with so little money in their pockets, that king Edward was obliged to give the master of the brig his gown, lined with martins, in part payment for their passage. As they neared the Dutch coast, they were descried by some ships belonging to the Hanse towns ; then at war both with the English and Flemings. These ships immediately bore down upon the fugitives, as an easy prey. To escape them, the king and his companions made the Dutch sailors Oct. 3. run their vessels aground, and then they waded to the shore. It was near Alkmaer ; and the governor Grutuse treated the king with all possible kindness ; fitting out him and his companions at his own expense to make a respectable appearance at the Hague ; where the duke of Burgundy then happened to be, and whither he conducted them. For this assistance in his time of need, Edward afterwards made the Dutchman earl of Winchester. All these events had passed so rapidly, that the duke of Burgundy had scarcely heard of Warwick's eluding his cruisers, when he was surprised and vexed by the arrival of Edward at his court, with a foolish tale to tell, of a kingdom lost by his presumption.

In England the king-making earl of Warwick, as he has been called, had delivered Henry VI. from the Tower ; which Edward's queen had quitted but a few days before, to take sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. There she was delivered of her eldest son,

afterwards Edward V. The protection that both law and superstition afforded, to all who sought shelter within such churches or monasteries as were acknowledged sanctuaries, was not violated in her case. Indeed, the only person of note who lost his life by the recent revolution, was Tiptoft, earl of Worcester; a nobleman whose turn of mind was more literary than that of any of his cotemporaries. But his love of reading had not induced him to *search the Scriptures*; that his evil temper might be healed. And his cruelty, in the office of high constable of England, had procured for him the name of "the butcher" from the people; who rejoiced when he perished on the scaffold in his turn.

In the following winter, the earl of Warwick was employed in taking a variety of measures to strengthen the new government; and to provide against either insurrections, or foreign invasion. But the Yorkists were discontented; and several of the Lancastrian nobles were still abroad with queen Margaret; for whom Louis XI. was preparing a better equipped fleet and army than he would have raised for her service but a month before. Her return to England with these auxiliaries, and with some of Henry's firmest friends, was therefore anxiously looked for by the earl; as a reinforcement which should finally secure her inactive husband upon the throne. But *the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held*, are heard in heaven, *saying, How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth**! With such blood, the founders of the house of Lancaster, Henry the Fourth and Fifth, had sought to cement the fabric of its power. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that neither the policy, nor the bravery, nor the fidelity, of either the new or an-

* Rev. vi. 9, 10.

cient partizans of that house could prevent its fall. The winds fought against queen Margaret. Above four months she watched the shore in vain. From November to April her mariners either could not, or would not, find an opportunity of putting to sea.

During great part of that time, Edward IV. was wearying the Burgundian court in vain, with requests for assistance. But his sister, the duchess Margaret, was sincerely attached to him; and, at length, to gratify her, without committing himself in a war with the English government, the duke gave Edward 50,000 florins; and secretly contrived that several vessels should wait his orders in one of the harbours of the isle of Walcheren; whilst he, publicly, issued a proclamation forbidding his subjects to enlist in Edward's service, or to aid his plans. On the second of March the Yorkist exiles, with perhaps 1000 hired Flemish soldiers, embarked in the shipping thus provided. But ^{1471.} though the situation of the isle of Walcheren enabled them to reach England with a wind unfavourable to queen Margaret's departure from the harbour in which the French fleet lay, it was nine days before they could reach Cromer, on the Norfolk coast. And from thence they were warned off by friends; who told them that the Lancastrian earl of Oxford was near, and would overpower them.

From off Cromer the king beat up with difficulty, in two days more, to the mouth of the Humber. And he and lord Hastings landed at Spurnhead, with but 500 men; uncertain what was become of their companions. The duke of ^{March 14.} Gloucester, and Antony Wydvile, now lord Rivers, were the next to reach the shore. And the following day the party set forward on their march inland. They met with no opposition. But they received no support; no cheering salutations. Hull shut its gates against them. And when Edward arrived under the walls of York he was told, that

he might enter the city with a few friends, if he came only to demand his father's dukedom, and private estates ; but not otherwise. He assured the citizens that he desired no more. And to this falsehood before men he added the guilt of calling the Most High to witness, as he stood before the great altar of the cathedral, that he was not come to England to seek its crown again.

The following day he left York for his paternal castle of Sendal, leaving Pontefract at but four miles distance, in which lay the marquis of Montacute with troops enough to have overwhelmed him. But the marquis seems to have thought Edward's small army but the vanguard of a larger force. And the king, giving him no time to remedy his mistake, pushed on with hasty marches to Nottingham. The duke of Exeter and the earl of Oxford, more zealous adversaries, were now approaching to attack him ; but his unhesitating advance made them believe, that he was driving all opposition before him, with a force which report made thirty times greater than it was ; so that they took to flight, and the earl of Warwick retreated. This again increased the courage of the Yorkists. Edward no longer concealed his intention of fighting for the crown ; and the duke of Clarence joining him, near Coventry, with 4000 men, the two brothers embraced each other, in the sight of their soldiers, amidst the sound of trumpets and the shouts of the army. From thence they marched together to London ; leaving the earls of Warwick and Oxford to unite in their rear.

The care of Henry VI., and of the capital, had been entrusted by Warwick to his brother the archbishop of York. And on the 11th of April, that political prelate made the docile king exhibit himself to the populace, riding in state to St. Paul's ; whilst on the afternoon of that same day, he bade the recorder admit Edward by a postern gate. The

Londoners were accordingly surprised by seeing a portion of the Yorkist army defiling along their streets, with Edward himself preceded by 500 “smoky foreign gunners,” as the old chronicle calls them; being musqueteers who had accompanied him from Flanders, and who carried burning matches of twisted hemp, as ready to fire their guns *. With a force of this as yet unusual kind, to awe his adversaries, Edward rode on to the bishop of London’s palace; where archbishop Nevile treacherously put their old master, Henry, into his hands. The abbot of Westminster had the much more honourable office of presenting to Edward his own queen and infant son; who had remained in safety within the sanctuary of that convent’s precincts.

There were still urgent wants to be provided for; and immediate dangers to be provided against. Unless Edward could directly distribute pay and rewards among his troops, and procure some necessary equipments of war, they could not be kept from plundering the city; nor he avoid extorting supplies from the merchants’ stores. And either violence would have made the citizens turn enemies to him; just as he was about to be engaged in a doubtful fight, with London in his rear. The agents of two wealthy Florentine brothers, Lorenzo and Julian de Medici, assisted him through this difficulty, by a loan from their well-stored coffers †.

* Gunlocks with a flint and hammer to strike fire, were not invented till much later. From this essential part of it, the whole instrument, comprehending the barrel, the stock, and the lock, was then called a matchlock; as afterwards a firelock.

† We find king Edward still in debt to the Medici for years after; and repaying them by a permission to purchase English commodities, and export them to what places in the Mediterranean they might choose; till the duties chargeable on these commodities, and not demanded, should amount to 7500*l*. The Italian money-changers well knew how to proportion the interest to the risk, and to the need of the borrower; and, at this time, the Medici had brokers in most of the great towns of England and France, who lent out their money on pledges. These persons put over their doors the arms of their employers, being three gilded pills;

The day following his entrance into London, it was Good-Friday, was given up to making such arrangements, and to getting ready other preparations for battle. And on Easter-Eve, Edward marched out of London for Barnet, with Henry in his train, to meet the earl of Warwick. Still the duke of Clarence would gladly have mediated between his father-in-law and his brother; and he sent a messenger to the former, to propose reconciling them. But the earl haughtily replied, "Go; tell your master, that Warwick, true to his word, is a better man than false and perjured Clarence." These were *swelling words of vanity*, indeed, to be sent into a camp in which were two kings, each of whom the earl had for years acknowledged as his sovereign; had profited by the bounty of each; had been false to each; had sworn to be faithful to each; and had broken his oath to each, in the sight of the whole nation!

He was now found by Edward with his men placed behind the hedges, in some enclosures, a little to the north of Barnet. The earl's army was superior to that of the Yorkists. And with him were his brother, the marquess of Montacute; the dukes of Exeter, and Somerset; and the earl of Oxford. The next morning, the morning of that Lord's-day, which all professed to hold in especial honour, in memory of their Redeemer's victory over death and the grave, these countrymen and kinsmen were again engaged in ferocious fight. There was no peculiar skill in generalship displayed by either commander. The battle was decided by what worldly men call unforeseen accidents; but in which they who really believe themselves to be living under an overruling

allusive to the family name, and to the custom of wrapping up a pill in gold leaf. Hence, as other pawn-brokers grew desirous of being thought to belong to this very distinguished firm, the three pills, or, as they are now commonly called, three golden balls, became the ordinary sign of that unpopular trade.

Providence, delight to perceive the evidence of His power ; working such ends as He chooses, by means which man cannot pretend to have devised. It was dusk when Edward began to take up his position, on Saturday evening ; and, meaning to arrange his troops in a line corresponding to that occupied by the earl's men, he made a mistake, and outflanked the Lancastrian left ; thereby bringing up his own left nearly opposite their centre ; and leaving unoccupied ground in front of their right, which consisted of the earl of Oxford's troops, with the Lancastrian artillery. Hence the earl of Warwick, sending orders that this artillery should keep up a cannonade through the night, wasted his scanty ammunition to no purpose. In the morning a thick fog still prevented the king's arrangement from being thoroughly understood by his enemies ; and the earl of Oxford, pushing on, passed by the main body of the Yorkists ; but finding himself unopposed, he made his men face about to rejoin the earl of Warwick, whose left was nearly surrounded. Now it so happened, that the earl of Oxford's badge was a star, and that of Edward IV. was the white rose with the sun's rays streaming from it* ; and, the mist going off as the earl of Oxford's men were returning, the similarity of their badge, and the direction from whence they were seen coming, conspired to make the earl of Warwick's soldiers take them for Edward's troops, and discharge against them a flight of arrows. Considering what changing of sides the Nevilles had lately exhibited, it was not unnatural that lord Oxford's followers, in their surprise at being thus attacked, should imagine that the earl of Warwick was once more a Yorkist, and betraying the cause for which he had of late pretended to be zealous. So, raising the cry of treason, they returned the volley they had received from their comrades ; and then

* See page 564.

hastily quitted the field ; leaving the other Lancastrians perplexed, and now outnumbered, to be easily beaten. In less than three hours, king Edward could boast, that his soldiers had killed both his cousins, Warwick and Montacute ; and that his brother-in-law, the duke of Exeter, lay expiring in the field ; though the latter nobleman, whose honest gratitude to Henry VI. had never allowed him to desert the house of Lancaster, was found still alive by his servants in the evening ; and carried to the sanctuary of Westminster. On his own side, the lords Cromwell and Saye had fallen. How many of his humbler countrymen his ambition and that of the Neviles had caused to perish by each other's hands, it is difficult to say, amidst very varying accounts. They will seem a dreadful multitude to those terrified sinners, when all are met together before the judgment-seat of Him who is no respecter of persons.

Whilst Edward had been advancing from Yorkshire, with a force to which the Lancastrians were even then very superior in numbers, queen Margaret was on shipboard, with her French allies and her English friends ; but still baffled, and prevented from joining Warwick, by opposing winds. At the very time that he was fighting the battle of Barnet, she was landing her reinforcement at Weymouth. The next night she slept in Cerne abbey. And there the duke of Somerset reached her, with the news, that her husband was again dethroned, and a prisoner ; that Warwick was slain ; and that he himself had with difficulty escaped, in the utter route of their friends. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick* *, says Solomon. Against that affliction she had long borne up. But, with all her high spirit, she now sunk to the ground in despair ; and, on coming to herself again, she fled with her son to the sanctuary

* Prov. xiii. 12.

of Beaulieu abbey. Whither, however, the Lancastrian lords soon followed her; to assure her that the gentry of the country were evidently still reluctant to join Edward; and to represent to her, that by the defection of the duke of Clarence, and the deaths of Warwick and Montacute, they had but lost three traitors; whom none of the party could have safely trusted. Thus urged, she consented to quit her asylum, and travel under their escort to Exeter; around which city the duke of Somerset, and Courtenay, earl of Devonshire, were employing their long respected influence to raise recruits; whilst Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, was mustering the Welsh, on the opposite side of the Bristol channel. And the whole of the western side of England was still open for them to join, or to receive reinforcements, from Henry's hereditary partizans in Lancashire.

It was clearly the policy of Edward not to leave them much time to rally their friends from these various quarters; and in a few days he April 24. was on his march, to cut off this line of communication between Devonshire and the north. The Lancastrians perceived his purpose; and by marches and counter-marches, with different divisions of their forces, they endeavoured to make him believe, that it was rather their intention to advance direct upon London. But presently they turned off from the borders of Wiltshire, to the north-west; to effect a junction with the earl of Pembroke. By this time, however, the king pressed so closely upon them, that being refused admission into Gloucester, by lord Beauchamp's son, to whom Edward had sent a promise of speedy relief; and not daring to halt for a few hours to attempt storming its walls, they felt it necessary to push on to Tewksbury. The May 3. day was hot, in that relaxing season of the year; and from the quarters in which they had slept, it proved a fatiguing march of thirty-six miles,

along miry lanes, or through the woods, and then upon stony highways; so that when they had reached Tewksbury, and Margaret advised their forthwith crossing the bridge over the Severn, the commanders thought it better to let their men and horses rest in a defensible enclosure, just short of the town.

All that day the king had been marching on their right flank, at but a short distance from them; and, as the day closed, he, too, pitched his tents; but three miles in their rear. They had chosen their ground well. So that when the king's brother, Richard, duke of Gloucester, brought up the vanguard of the Yorkist army, the next morning, to the attack of the Lancastrian camp, his men found themselves so embarrassed, by the necessity of crossing a deep lane, and pushing through thick hedges, in the teeth of their adversaries, that they soon desisted from the attempt. But when he ordered up his few cannon, the fire provoked the duke of Somerset to quit his post, and to sally out upon the Yorkists. For a moment the impetuosity of this sally was successful in throwing the Yorkists into confusion; but, lord Wenlock not suffering any of the main body of the Lancastrians to move to his support, a division of the Yorkists got between them and him; and, entering the camp, where Somerset had quitted it, they made way for the king to follow them. The duke now galloped back too late; and in his anger, cleft his comrade lord Wenlock's head with one blow of his battle-axe. But such wild fury could not restore the broken order, nor reanimate the courage of the Lancastrians. The men were now only bent on finding ways of escape from the field; and most of their surviving officers betook themselves, for protection, to the church of the adjoining abbey. Prince Edward, now a youth in his eighteenth year, was overtaken at the entrance of the town, and brought before the king. And being tauntingly asked, "What brought him to England,"

he boldly replied, "I came to preserve my father's crown, and my own inheritance." For which frank answer, the king struck the noble youth in the face, with his iron glove; and then either Clarence and Gloucester, or their attendants, fell upon the disarmed prince, and killed him. After this crime, the king went on to the church; and would have had the work of slaughter continued within its consecrated walls, but that a priest had the humanity and the courage to put himself in the door-way, with the sacramental wafer * in his hand; and to refuse letting any one enter, unless they would trample at once upon him and upon it. By his firmness, this lover of mercy obtained from the king a solemn promise, that the lives of all, who had sought refuge there, should be spared.

Two days afterwards, however, the king's resolution to put it out of the power of the Lancastrian party to give him any farther trouble, tempted him to forfeit his pledged word. He thought himself merciful enough in sparing the life of Margaret, who had been brought in prisoner from a neighbouring nunnery. And he commissioned the dukes of Gloucester and Norfolk to sit in judgment on the officers taken in Tewksbury Church. Nor had these nobles any sense of honour strong enough to prevent their acting under this disgraceful commission. So they sentenced the duke of Somerset, the prior of the order of St. John †, and thirteen other knights and gentlemen, to be beheaded in the market-place.

Little did king Edward foresee the consequences of thus teaching his younger brother, Gloucester, then but eighteen years of age, to issue lawless orders for the shedding of a noble kinsman's blood. The wretched young man was but too ready to learn so dreadful a lesson.

* See p. 16.

† See Vol. i. p. 474. and Vol. ii. p. 126.

As the triumphant party were returning towards London, they were met with the news that another Nevile, a base-born son of lord Falconberg, to whom Warwick had deputed the command of the fleet, had sailed up the Thames, and made an attempt on the Tower, to set Henry VI. once more at liberty; and that failing in this attempt, he had collected a host of Kentish yeomen to join him in an attack on the city, for the sake of pillage; and had partially set fire to it, before he was repulsed by some courageous aldermen. This would lead the Yorkists to reflect, and perhaps it might tempt them to say aloud, that unambitious of reigning as Henry was, his title would still serve as a motive, or as an excuse for adventurers to hoist the standard of rebellion; whereas, now his son was despatched, if he too were dead, there would be an end of the house of Lancaster. And so it was, that though king Edward May 22. and his train passed but a day in London, before they quitted it again, to put down the Kentish insurgents, on that very day Henry expired in his prison, in the Tower. How he came by his death, the people were never told; and the government cared not to enquire. But the report ran, that the young duke of Gloucester was his murderer.

With this foul sin the wars of the white and red rose ended, for the present. They would have been more destructive, but that the nation had taken such little interest in the later struggles of the contending parties, that Edward had been obliged to venture on the decisive battle of Tewksbury, with but 3000 infantry under his command; and, if his cavalry were twice as many, this would be as large an army as he brought to Barnet field. A kingdom inhabited by a people too addicted to war, could not have been lost, as he lost it, in eleven days, nor regained by a campaign of but as many weeks, had not the people made up their minds, that it mattered little to them whether they were to be governed by

a well-meaning sovereign, incapable of restraining the violence of the nobility, or by a dissolute young sovereign, who revelled on the unjustly confiscated estates of his opponents : and still less whether the Neviles, or the Wydviles, were to engross the favours of the court. But though this growing indifference to the causes of the war had, latterly, confined the loss of lives in battle to the destruction of turbulent nobles, and of such as followed them to share the false pleasures of a lawless and adventurous life, still the injury done to the peaceful by these campaigns was exceedingly great. For low as were the numbers in the armies engaged, they moved over the country like bands of so many robbers ; it being, then, no part of a commander's care to secure provision for his troops by purchases, or by any peaceable and fair arrangement, after they might have exhausted the little stock which the gentlemen, at least, brought with them to his camp.

These frequent appeals to the sword, to decide the disputes between the great, had also produced a general conviction in the minds of the people, that right, without might, was of little value ; but that might, without right, was enough for every purpose. Hence it has been observed, that this was the first reign since the forms of parliament had assumed any regularity, in which no act was passed to extend the protection of the law for the oppressed ; and no petition offered by the commons, for the legal redress of grievances. History therefore becomes, at this period, a mere record of the vices to which worldly greatness peculiarly tempts its possessors, and of the pitiable effects of such temptation upon men, to whom genuine religion was quite unknown ; whom custom encouraged in the indulgence of many criminal desires ; and who were too powerful to fear the restraints of human laws.

The temptation to revenge would take less hold of a person of king Edward's character, than many

other inducements to wrong; and, as his pride revolted at appearing to fear the enmity of a woman, queen Margaret was spared any harder measure, than that of remaining in custody, either at Windsor or Wallingford; till king Louis, five years later, paid her ransom, and thus procured her permission to return to France.

There was still a brother of Warwick, living in affluence and pomp; the archbishop of York. And Edward invited himself once more to Moor-Park, to hunt the deer with this prelate. The offer of such a visit was accepted as an honour; and the archbishop invited several nobles to meet the king, and collected his plate from his other residences, to set out a magnificent repast. But when all was prepared, the king affected to consider the conditions of the archbishop's pardon as violated, by his recently sending money to his brother-in-law, the earl of Oxford. And on this pretext, he sent officers to seize his plate; confiscated the revenues of his see; and committed him to prison.

As for the earl of Oxford himself, that steady Lancastrian nobleman thought it no disgrace to turn pirate; and then got possession of St. Michael's mount, off the Cornish coast, from which he made pillaging excursions into the country; till being besieged, he was fain to surrender, on no better terms than submission to imprisonment, for the rest of his days. And his estates being confiscated, his countess, the sister of king-making Warwick, was driven to earn her food by her needle.

Edward's own brother-in-law, the duke of Exeter, was driven to an untimely end. He had recovered from the wounds received in the Barnet-fight; but was detained in custody till the king had procured a divorce for his sister, the duchess, and she had married sir Thomas St. Leger. After which the duke was ordered to quit England; and his corpse was found floating in the sea, between Dover

and Calais. Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, the nearest surviving kinsman of Henry VI. escaped better. He had fled from Wales, as soon as he heard the result of the battle of Tewksbury; and had carried with him his young nephew, Henry earl of Richmond, the only son of Edmund Tudor by his wife, the lady Margaret Beaufort. They sought and found shelter, at the court of Francis, duke of Bretagne; who had a peculiar respect for the title of Richmond, as having been borne by several of his predecessors, in the time of their close alliance with the kings of England. And though often solicited by king Edward to give them up to him, and occasionally standing much in need of the king of England's support, to defend him from the aggressions of Louis XI., this duke deserves the praise of an upright man, for the resolution with which he persisted in affording a hospitable protection to those two exiles.

After punishing their adversaries, the victorious party were exposed to other temptations in dividing the spoil. The duke of Clarence would have kept the whole of Warwick's vast estates, as husband to his daughter Isabella. But the duke of Gloucester determined to have her sister, the lady Ann Neville, for his wife; for the sake of the latter's just claim to be co-heiress with the duchess of Clarence. If the young lady had any natural affections, she could not but abhor the thought of accepting a husband from the house of York, which had so recently slain her uncle, Montacute, and her father, Warwick; and still more, if that husband was to be the duke of Gloucester, then generally believed to have shared in the murder of the young prince, to whom she had been betrothed, and to have been the assassin of that princè's meek and gentle father. But females of rank were not then allowed to refuse an union with any unconvicted felon, if the king chose to give or sell them in marriage. Concealment was the only

way of escape, and this daughter of the earl of Warwick assumed the disguise of a cook-maid, to elude the duke of Gloucester's search. But, after some months, his emissaries found her out, under that humble appearance; and the unhappy lady was dragged from her retreat, and compelled to marry him. Still the duke of Clarence said to the king his brother, "He may have my lady sister-in-law, but we shall part no livelihood." And this dispute could not be settled, till Edward agreed to have an act passed in parliament, whereby May, 1474. the earl's widow, the wealthy heiress of the Spencers and the Beauchamps, through whom the earldom of Warwick came to him, was stripped of her inheritance, to satisfy the rapacity of her princely sons-in-law; and was reduced to a pittance which she was fain to make sufficient, by becoming lodger in a nunnery.

By this time the dissolute extravagance of Edward's court was encumbering all its principal personages with debts. And the thoughts of the king and his companions turned towards the booty that might be gained by a war with France; which the dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne were inviting him to undertake, that they might punish Louis XI. for his continual attempts to defraud them of one town after another. It was accordingly agreed that king Edward should renew the claims of his predecessors upon the crown of France; and should invade that kingdom with an army, which the duke of Burgundy was to meet with a large reinforcement. And they settled how their spoils and conquests should be shared. The intention of undertaking a war obliged king Edward to call a parliament, and to ask for supplies. And he found the nation so eager to rush into the same guilty career as their fathers, towards France, that the commons voted to raise 14000 archers, and to maintain them for a year. And the nobility and clergy granted him an income

tax of ten per cent. upon their revenues. Nor did half a year elapse, before the commons granted him a further supply of a fifteenth to complete his preparations; but with a reserve of a sixth of its amount *, to admit of exemptions, necessary for the relief of towns decayed by the late civil wars. Most of the few subsidies granted in this reign, were given with the like reserve; and how unable some districts must have been to pay their old quota, may be gathered from the fact, that in 1468, Essex and Hertford had but one sheriff between them; and he reported, in answer to the writ for a general election, that Colchester and Maldon were the only boroughs in the two counties, which could afford to return members to parliament; or, in other words, to pay the moderate wages which members then received from their constituents during the few weeks that parliament might sit. But the deficiency in the subsidies was more than made up by the illegal method of raising money under the name of a *benevolence*, to which the king had again recourse; and he drew a considerable amount, in this way, from the London merchants. Civility was happily, however, no less useful than intimidation, to bring the donors to contribute large sums; when thus required to shew their good will to the king. And Edward's politic attentions to the mayor and aldermen went so far, that a city chronicler tells with delight how the king invited them to hunt with him in Waltham forest; and how, when they arrived there, they found "a pleasant lodge of green boughs ordained for them," and a rich repast provided, that they might dine before they wearied themselves with a longer ride. As also, how after dinner, when they had killed both red and fallow deer, the king gave the mayor the venison; and further, sent six bucks and a tun of wine, as his present to the mayoress

* See p. 511.

and aldermen's wives; on which they feasted, in their turn, in the drapers' hall. But still, before they would part with their money for the conquest of France, the Londoners stipulated to be allowed to send certain citizens in the king's company; who should see that the sum they gave was discreetly spent upon those soldiers whom the city was pledged to maintain.

Their fear, that the king might employ his subjects' money in idle revellings, rather than to follow up laborious plans for conquest, proved to be well founded; though the rapid termination of the campaign was not altogether imputable to the king. He landed at Calais with 15,000 archers, and 1500 men-at-arms. But he found that the duke of Burgundy was not ready to join him; and when that peculiarly self-willed prince, at length, reached the English camp, it was but with a small retinue; his army having been defeated and ruined, in an ill-conducted attempt to subdue a petty Flemish town. And whilst Edward was both irritated and perplexed by this failure in the promises made to him, the French king was sending heralds into his camp, with offers of considerable advantage; to be obtained by retiring, and giving up his alliance with the two dukes. And these heralds were, at the same time, employed in the dishonourable office of bribing the counsellors of the king of England; to influence their master to accept the offers of Louis. Hence, when king Edward called the nobility and chief officers of his army into his presence, he found them nearly unanimous in recommending, that there should be no attempt to make any great progress in the war, till it could be known what the fear of its presence might induce Louis to propose. And now, they who were in the secret, thought fit to have recourse to low cunning, to make the committee of citizens as willing to return home, without a longer campaign, as themselves. To

bring this about, they managed that the tents of these citizens, men accustomed to the peaceful occupations and sober hours of a tradesman's life, should always be pitched in that quarter most likely to be disturbed by the enemy; and that the morning call should be first sounded in their weary ears. By such pitiful arts, all who approached the king were brought to acquiesce in his bargaining with Louis for the price, at which an English sovereign should desert his allies. And Louis, computing the probable expense of conducting even a prosperous warfare, now that the English had got footing upon the soil of France, consented to purchase the retreat of their army, and a truce for the next seven years, by the payment of 23,000*l.* for the present; with a promise of an annual pension to king Edward of 15,000*l.* a-year for life; besides an engagement that the heir to the French crown should, in due time, marry that young princess Elizabeth, who has been already mentioned as promised to Lord Montacute's son, Nevile, duke of Bedford. The deliverance of Queen Margaret was made a farther excuse for the king of France giving Edward 15,000*l.* more; for which Louis repaid himself out of her father's territories. Nor was this near the whole of the expense to which Louis put himself, to prevent any farther interference to his schemes from England. To the disgrace of the English nobles of that day, who have never been imitated in their misconduct, but in times of the most abandoned profligacy, Edward's chancellor, admiral, and master of the rolls; nay, even his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas St. Leger, and his stepson, the marquess of Dorset, are all known to have received bribes from France; by the acknowledgments, under their own hands, being preserved in the French exchequer. The Lord Howard was shameless enough to become a regular pensioner of the French court; besides receiving from thence, in two years, no less than 8000*l.* in

money and plate. And the favourite companion of King Edward in that wretched pursuit of sinful pleasures, to which he was so lamentably given up, the Lord Hastings, whilst he affected a scruple about signing his name to a receipt for his bribe, which would have been put into Louis's hands, said to the French agent, "If you wish me to receive it, you may put it into my sleeve."

August. When the terms of their treaty had been arranged, the two kings met by appointment, on a bridge over the Somme, near Amiens. But as the crafty disposition of Louis made him constantly suspicious of treachery, which he knew himself to be ever ready to devise, a strong wooden grating was erected across the bridge. Through this the monarchs shook hands. And after making a palpably hollow profession of friendship, which Edward alarmed his brother king, by seeming disposed to accept as an invitation to visit Paris, Louis withdrew from the conference; and ordered the immediate payment of the stipulated sums, on the receipt of which the English army was to begin its march home.

Having thus filled his coffers, Edward was now rich enough to indulge again in pomp and revelry, without meeting another parliament. But though the nation thus remained at peace, in despite of its eagerness to incur the guilt of an unnecessary and unjust war, the voice of discontent began to be loudly heard, when its gentry found their hopes of being enriched with foreign rapine thus brought to an end; and there were some who, collecting the disbanded soldiers around them, threw whole counties into alarm and confusion by their extensive robberies. To check these evils, the king obliged even the stewards of his manors, as well as the known officers of his government, to send him detailed accounts of the conduct of their neighbours. And he attended the judges in person on some circuits; causing the severe sentences of the English law to

be executed with unsparing rigour. In the official records of these times of violence, we find that the universities, which ought to have been as *cities upon a hill*, conspicuous for beauty and not for disorder, were the terror of the country round them; the misnamed *scholars and clerks* of Oxford going out armed, even into Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, to rob houses; and their brethren at Cambridge raising money, by threatening letters, in that county and Essex; and burning the houses of gentlemen and yeomen, if refused their demands. Almost within the precincts of the latter university, there was a petty war between the monks of Barnwell and the copyholders of Chesterton; whom the former declared to be, of right, their bond-slaves. And one of these copyholders being waylaid and robbed by six priests and monks, was carried off by them to prison; having received such wounds from their blows, that when, at the end of seven years, he recovered his liberty, and petitioned for redress, the scars were still remaining. But popular violence received a greater check than kings or magistrates could interpose, from a visitation which the just wrath of God at length again poured down upon this seemingly irreclaimable people. A pesti- 1477.
lence raged over England; of which the chroniclers said in their terror, when its effects had recently passed before their eyes, that it destroyed greater numbers in four months than had perished in the fifteen past years of war. And yet it broke out again in London, after an interval of but two years, and continued to afflict that city and its neighbourhood for fourteen months more.

The believer will rejoice to hope that these chastisements, inflicted by a God whose mercy is no less infinite than his justice, were made, and were intended, to serve the gracious purpose of leading many sinners to repentance; whilst they so awefully manifested His hatred of sin. And though it is to

be feared that numbers, who *had heard the word and received it with gladness*, in the preceding age, had fallen away before the stumbling-block of persecution; and so left not the inestimable inheritance to their children; yet, thanks be to God, He did not suffer the light to be wholly quenched, or withdrawn. The art of printing, which was soon to become the means of making the Scriptures more widely known than ever, was first practised in England, in the very year of this frightful pestilence. *The poor had still the Gospel preached to them.* A teacher from their humblest ranks suffered martyrdom by fire; and prepared himself for meeting his tortures with such calm courage, as the legends of chivalry would have taught men to believe that nothing but noble birth, and the love of warlike fame, could inspire. But whilst God *hath mercy on whom He will have mercy*, the Scripture adds, that *whom He will He hardeneth**. King Edward and his brothers having been visited with reverses, and raised again to honour; and having been neither humbled by affliction, nor made thankful by prosperity, the long-suffering of God would wait for them no more; but deeper sins, or heavier sorrow, became the just punishment of each.

It so happened that the duke of Clarence lost his wife, about the same time that the duke of Burgundy perished in an unjust attack upon the Swiss, and was to be succeeded in his territories by his only daughter. His widow, the English Duchess Margaret, being the young lady's stepmother, would gladly have seen Clarence married to the Burgundian heiress. But Edward thought it might endanger his throne, to let this restless brother add to his late wife's ample property, the possession of a foreign revenue larger than that of the crown of England, and the command of a warlike, as well as a

* Rom. ix. 18.

wealthy people: especially as he had information that the duke of Clarence still carefully preserved an act, passed during Henry the Sixth's restoration, by which it had been enacted, that the duke should succeed to the throne, if Henry's son died without heirs. Hence the king thwarted the proposed match. And Clarence was so provoked by this, that he could not forbear openly shewing his discontent; absenting himself from council; and declining to visit the king. It is supposed to have been partly for the purpose of letting the duke see that his influence was but of little moment, independent of the king's favour, that one of his attendant esquires, Thomas Burdett, was brought to trial, and executed, on two absurd charges; one, that he and a chaplain of the duke, had made leaden images, by the melting of which, they were to cause lord Beauchamp to pine away in like manner; the other, that the king having killed a white deer of his, in Derbyshire, the said Burdett had wished the head and horns of this deer were in the king's belly. After his execution, the duke of Clarence went to the council, the king himself being then absent at Windsor, and produced a minorite friar, who had taken Burdett's confession; and who avouched that the poor gentleman could not have been guilty of the magical arts ascribed to him.

No sooner had Edward heard of this, than he came up to town; summoned the duke, with the mayor and sheriffs into his presence; charged him, before them, with saying that his judges and the juries, gave unjust sentences; and ordered the sheriffs to take the duke of Clarence to the Tower. The king's next step was to appoint the duke of Buckingham high steward of England; for holding a court of peers to try him. And before the nobles thus assembled, Edward was not ashamed to act the part of his brother's accuser in per-
son; instead of letting one of his ministers

Jan. 16,
1478.

perform what he himself should have shrunk from, as too painful an office, even if it had been usually sustained by the sovereign. On the other hand, the duke of Clarence was his own unsupported defender; none of the peers having the honest courage to question the truth of the king's accusations, nor to observe to how little some of them amounted, if true. The main charges alleged against him were, that he had caused persons to swear to be faithful to himself, and to his heirs, without excepting their allegiance to the king. And had then told them he meant to be revenged on his brother—that he had further called the king a magician—and had asserted him to be base-born.

It is not known what proofs were brought forward of his having thus offended; but the duke of Buckingham delivered in the verdict of the peers, declaring him guilty. Still, however, king Edward feared to excite the abhorrence of the nation, by putting his brother to death; until the house of commons, as obsequious to his evil passions as their superiors, petitioned him, by their speaker, to let justice be done upon the duke of Clarence. A few days after this it was made public, that the duke had died in the Tower; how, the people were not told. But an idle story got abroad, that having been allowed to choose the manner of his death, he had desired, with profane jocularly at the sensual habits of that past life, for which he was immediately to give account before a Holy God, that his last breath might be drawn in wine; and that he was accordingly drowned in a butt of malmsey.

When the deed was done, Edward became terrified at having thus taken a brother's life. And it is said, that when any of his courtiers asked him to spare some convict's life, which they were often paid to do, he would exclaim, 'Unhappy brother! No man sued to me to spare thy life!'—Words which betray his willingness to deceive himself with the

vain hope, that the guilt of his offence might be thrown off upon others. Yet it was true of the duke of Gloucester, that his neglecting to sue to Edward, to spare their common brother, did, indeed, make him a sharer in the king's sin to a fearful amount. But though Edward lamented his offence, it was not with that *godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation**. He sought to divert his thoughts from the past, by looking forward to that short-lived futurity which belongs to all earthly projects. He formed schemes, and sent embassies; to secure splendid matches for all his children, whilst still in their infancy. It has been told, that to Elizabeth, the eldest girl, the dauphin was betrothed. For his second daughter, Cecily, he engaged the son and heir of James III. king of Scotland; and he trusted to see Catherine become a Spanish queen. The annual instalments of the princess Cecily's dower had already been sent for some years to Scotland. But king James had a discontented brother, the duke of Albany, who came to England, and made Edward more advantageous offers; on the condition of his helping him to dethrone James. To this criminal proposal, Edward, angry on other accounts with the Scottish king, too readily agreed; and sent the duke of Gloucester with Albany, at the head of a large English army; to learn June,
1482. with what indifference the mass of the people would behold a younger brother, attempting to deprive his elder's family of their inheritance.

They were besieging Berwick, when a conspiracy among the Scotch nobles obliged James to disband his army; and opened the road for the two dukes to march to Edinburgh unopposed. There, however, the duke of Albany relented, and was reconciled to his brother; as a public manifestation of which, he and king James rode through the city on one horse,

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

to the palace of Holyrood House; and afterwards slept in the same bed. They then civilly dismissed the duke's English friends; after stipulating that Berwick should be given up to Edward and that the money received as the lady Cecily's dowry should be repaid.

The time when his daughter Elizabeth should have been sent for, by her expected father-in-law, Louis XI. was also now elapsed. And though excuses had been made for delaying to do this, they had been borne with; because the French king had consented to pay, instead of receiving money, for marrying his son. But a more valuable match fell within Louis's grasp on the continent; the infant child of that heiress of Burgundy, whom the duke of Clarence had wished to have. And to make terms with her guardians, Louis openly disavowed any intention of allowing the dauphin to marry the English princess.

Rage at this disappointment, and at Louis's indifference to his anger, so wrought upon Edward, now grown bloated, and constantly feverish from intemperance, that he fell into a disease;
Apr. 9.
1483. which in a few days brought him to the grave, in no more than the forty-first year of his age.

To his wife, and children, his death was a fearful event. For the queen well knew, that she and her brothers were in ill-favour with the people. And of her two sons by king Edward, the eldest, styled as usual the prince of Wales, was not yet thirteen years of age; and, therefore, obviously incapable of contending with the unprincipled and factious nobles, by whom she saw he would be surrounded. His subjects, too, could not avoid reflecting, with much alarm, on the calamities which had attended the two last minorities; though begun when the royal authority was much more generally held in honour than now. Nor had the deceased king been by any means unpopular with them, notwithstanding his undisguised vices; for his accessibility and good-

humoured tone disposed them to love him ; whilst the manners of the age were so corrupt, and the indulgence of the vindictive passions was so common, that his people had seen nothing in his conduct but what they were accustomed to expect from men in power, unless the death of Clarence ; and in that the public opinion thought him misled by nobles more disliked than he. His extorting money under the name of a *benevolence*, seemed to them the most objectionable part of his behaviour ; yet as this, like the confiscation of the property of the Lancastrian nobles, injured the few, and enabled the many to escape with lower taxes, than had, not long before, been levied upon all, selfishness made the majority listen to the complaints of the losers, without joining in their indignation at the king's injustice. He had also employed other methods of supplying his expences, which were not felt to be injurious by any. Such were his turning merchant ; and his selling licences to violate various commercial laws ; the enactment of most of which was discreditable, either to the good sense, or to the public spirit of the legislators. It might have been mistaken policy which tempted his predecessors to make it unlawful to export wool, leather, lead, or tin, called the staple commodities, to any continental port, save the *staple* town of Calais. And, on the other hand, it was probably lord Warwick's interest in the prosperity of Calais, which occasioned an act, in the fourth year of this reign, forbidding pilgrims to quit England from any port except the opposite one of Dover. But the favouring of particular trades and interests seems to have taken up the whole attention of Edward's few parliaments. Many of their acts could only have been drawn up by trading burgesses ; who described in them, with a particularity which none but masters of the business could have employed, how salmon, and eels, and herrings should be boned, and pickled, and packed ; and how woollen

cloths should be cut and sorted; and the different kinds of wool mixed up in their texture. Yet a merciful clause in one of the last described acts, affords pleasing evidence of the benevolence of the framers; for it insists that workmen should be paid in money, and not obliged to accept "pins and girdles and other unprofitable ware," from their employers, instead.

The agriculturists had used their weight in parliament to carry a law, forbidding the importation of corn, as long as wheat should not be above 10s.; rye 6s.; and barley 4s. 6d. the quarter. The manufacturers had prevailed to have the importation of wrought silk, ribbons, &c. forbidden; with a long catalogue of articles in woollen, haberdashery, sadlery, and iron ware. Machinery too now first appears to

1482. have alarmed the English legislators; and an act was passed, setting forth, that whereas "hats and caps used to be fulled and thickened by the strength of men, with hand and foot, but that now of late there is a subtle mean, by reason of a fulling-mill, whereby more caps may be fulled and thickened in one day, than could be done by the strength of fourscore men, to the ruin of the livelihood of many," therefore, the thickening of hats at a mill is strictly forbidden. The knights and nobles dictated an act, forbidding yeomen to keep *games*, i. e. flocks of swans, except in Croyland. The king's ministers suggested other laws, aiming to oblige the people of England to keep up their now declining taste for archery; as an amusement that fitted them for war. To this end one act insists, that ships from Venice and certain other countries, shall bring four bow-staves for sale with every ton of merchandize. Another, that dealers shall not ask more than 5s. for a long-bow of yew; which, compared with the value of a quarter of wheat, will be seen to be a very high price. Another, that whereas the wood of the aspen tree "is the lightest for clogs, and most

easy for the wear of all estates, gentles, and other the king's people," patten-makers may use such parts of it as will not do for arrows, but are warned to beware of daring to cut up a long clean piece of the asp. A third act takes a harsher way of encouraging archery; enacting, that whereas the people are drawn aside from that useful diversion by playing at dice, quoits, and football, all which this law puts upon a level, and "other new imagined games," the severe penalty of two years' imprisonment, with the forfeiture of 15*l.* is to be inflicted on any person found so playing.

King Edward himself is supposed to have been the deviser of other laws of that class called sumptuary; which prescribe the value, or the kind of dress and ornaments which any one might wear, according to his rank; allowing no man to encroach on what was to mark his superior. These laws forbid any one beneath the rank of a lord, unless his wife or children, to wear cloth or gold, or silk of a purple colour, or to have shoes with pikes more than two inches long*. And descending with great particularity through the different gradations of society, they forbid any petty tradesman's servant, or labourer, to use cloth for his garments of a higher price than 3*s.* the yard.

Of the very few laws which turn on real business of state, there is one requiring Irish absentees to return home, and assist in maintaining the king's authority in their own country; which if they do not, they are to be taxed, to the amount of 1*s.* in the pound, on all rents received in England. But the king himself ought to have remembered his own duty towards his Irish subjects. To suffer any such portion of his dominions to be so mismanaged as Ireland was, without an effort to correct the evil, would have been criminal in any sovereign. But it

* See p. 292.

was particularly ungrateful in Edward, whose father's few services rendered to that country, had been repaid by the Irish with zealous attachment to his family, and hearty support in the time of their need. Yet the king had allowed the Duke of Clarence to hold the government of Ireland, during the greater part of his reign, without ever visiting it; and, after his death, had bestowed the governorship on his own son, the Duke of York, a child scarcely out of his nurse's arms. Under these princes of the blood, the royal authority had been delegated to a lord deputy; and that office had been given to Irish nobles, heads of contending parties; whose aim had been but to exalt themselves in the eyes of their countrymen, and to subdue the rivals of their respective families. This had kept up petty wars between vindictive chieftains; with rival parliaments in the English pale. Whilst the narrow circuit, within which obedience to law was even nominally acknowledged, had been gradually contracted. The king who could raise above 16,000 men to spoil France; and a still larger army to encourage an unnatural rebellion in Scotland, was so far from attempting to lead a competent force into Ireland, to awe opposing factions into submission, that thirteen friends of order in the counties of Meath, Kildare, Dublin, and Louth, who under the name of the fraternity of St. George, undertook to support the authority of government, were fain to bind themselves to raise 120 archers, and 40 horsemen, with as many attendant foot. And when the Deputy, desirous to avail himself of their services, sought how to raise money for paying these 200 men, though it was but to amount on the whole to 30*l.* a year, a tax of a shilling in the pound on all merchandize sold in the king's Irish dominions, except hides and the goods of freemen of Dublin and Drogheda, was declared necessary to raise this paltry sum. Whilst but a few

years after, when Edward sent out an English nobleman, Lord Grey, as his son's representative, with an order for his keeping up a body of 140 horsemen to serve the purposes of a police, he was obliged to promise that lord; that if the Irish revenue should prove unequal to the maintenance of this little troop, the deficiency should be made good from England. Such was, thus confessedly, the reduced and wretched state of the king's territories in Ireland; and such the unprofitableness of its possession, three hundred years after the Plantagenets began a conquest which they had not cared to complete, because they found no wealth to plunder, and no splendid rivals to dispute it with them.

END OF VOL. II.

